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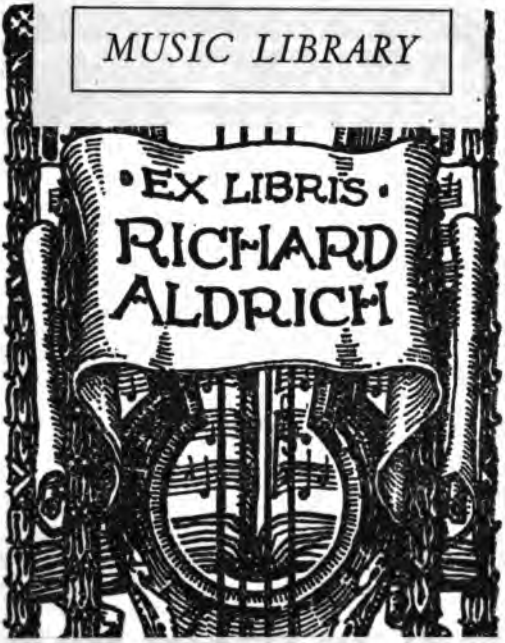

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ABOUT MUSICIANS

BY THE WAY

Being a Collection of Short Essays on Music and Art in General taken from the Program-Books of the Boston Symphony Orchestra

VOL. II.

BY

William Foster Apthorp

BOSTON
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TO

MY MOTHER

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ABOUT MUSICIANS

ABOUT MUSICIANS

The Old Déchanteurs

THE work of the Déchanteurs went forward slowly; it could not well do otherwise. In their day, theorists had more to do than to discover the laws of musical composition: they had also to find out some way of writing music. A whole new system of musical notation had to be worked out and established. The great triumph of scholastic musicians, from Guido d'Arezzo in the eleventh century down to the middle of the fourteenth, was the establishment of what is known as the system of Mensural Notation.

The Integral Calculus, the theory of Doubly Periodic Functions, Analytic Mechanics, the Metaphysics of Hegel or Fichte, are all tolerably ponderous and abstruse subjects; but for something positively brain-racking in its vast complexity give me the theory — let alone the

The Old Déchanteurs

practice — of Mediæval Mensural Notation! As Walter Besant once said of the French Equivocal Rhyme, it seems as if something penal might be done with it. Solitary incarceration, on a diet of stale bread and water, with an occasional allowance of more stimulating brain-food, — say, boiled haddock, — and a treatise on Mensural Notation, with no hope of liberation till the subject had been fully mastered, would suffice to deter a man from any crime. The Schleswig-Holstein Question was child's-play in comparison!

No wonder the old scholastic musicians, with this dire task on their hands, wrote music in which no mortal can find inspiration! How difficult the task was, may be appreciated when we consider that they who undertook it had worse than nothing to start with. Musical notation, at the time when Guido d'Arezzo began his labours, was a terribly complex system, all but impossible to master, requiring years and years of study to understand. Yet, with all its harassing complications, it was so vague, so deficient in definite

The Old Déchanteurs

meaning, that music written in it, were it but a simple melody, was open to many different interpretations. No singer, no matter how learned and expert, could be even approximately sure of reading it right. The composer's intentions were quite problematical, and the notation could serve as little more than a system of mnemonics, like the Peruvian *Quipus*, enabling a singer to retain in his memory what had been taught him orally by the composer.

Consider also that, for a long time, all efforts were directed toward improving the old system, instead of directly inventing a new one; that, in this way, complications were heaped upon complications, and every advance was a deeper plunge into this Slough of Despond, until at last the Mensural Note was hit upon, as the only hope of getting out of it. Consider further that, even when the mensural note was established, as a sure means of communicating musical ideas, not one tithe of its possibilities were suspected. In their gradual development of Mensural Notation com-

The Old Déchanteurs

posers and theorists would go only just far enough barely to satisfy the needs of the music of their own day; every new development of the Discantus necessitated a fresh overhauling of the system of notation, at times an entire remodelling of the same from the very beginning. Consider all this, I say, and you will begin to see what a piece of work it was.

Here were hard-working musicians, just beginning to catch a glimpse of what Music could be, making discoveries the value of which was highly problematical even to themselves, and yet with no definite musical notation wherewith to write down their new ideas! No wonder Music was considered to be a "branch of Mathematics." For three centuries the Déchanteurs and their successors did all the drudgery, the wood-hewing and water-drawing, of musical development. Well, this comparatively ignoble work had to be done; so all honour to them who did it!

The Old Strict Contrapuntists

THE beauty to be found in the old music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is mainly this: absolute perfection of melodic outline, thorough repose, perfect simplicity of effect, no matter how complex the musical organism: above all, the greatest imaginable stoutness of musical construction. The enormous technical skill of the old masters of this period lay in their entire command over their musical material, and their consequent thrifty use of it. They had the keenest eye for every possibility of beauty that lay hidden in this material, and knew how to develop these dormant potencies into musical existence and life. For the expression of passion and individual emotion they had no musical means. That subjective quality in modern music which seems to lift the veil from before the sanctuary of the composer's very heart, and initiate us into the mystery of his personal emotional life, was foreign to their writing. But what their music did express more transcendently than it has been expressed since, is that impersonal, superearthly state of being for which the Hindoos

The Old Strict Contrapuntists

have found the word *Nirvana*, and in Christian Philosophy is called Ecstasy. Leaving aside the question of specific aesthetic beauty, the music of later periods may be characterized as an ideal mirror in which Man sees a transfigured reflection of himself, of human joys, sorrows, passions, struggles, defeats, victories. This older music is a mirror, tilted at such an angle that, in it, we see reflected the blue of heaven itself.

It has been objected that the old composers expended a large part of their powers upon solving mere technical difficulties, in working out sheer musical puzzles. Well, this was hardly avoidable. For a couple of centuries, musicians had been hard at work on the Discantus; their experiments in this style of writing had led up to the discovery of the true principles of Counterpoint. The technical difficulties of this style had been so far conquered that composers could write in it with sufficient ease and freedom to give some scope to their musical imagination and inventiveness. The musical form was firmly es-

The Old Strict Contrapuntists

tablished, and found to be excellent. How natural was it, then, for composers to try to push this form to its furthest practicable limits, to try to find out what new subtleties it might be capable of, and thus exhaust its aesthetic possibilities! The simplest laws of Imitative Counterpoint were at first mere trammels on the composer's genius; but time and practice showed them to be natural and productive of admirable results, when intelligently and skilfully followed. What was at first a galling shackle soon became a source of power; might it not be found that new and more intricate contrapuntal devices, more difficult still to work with, would in their turn prove themselves fresh sources of power, when once thoroughly mastered? At the very worst, the technical skill developed in mastering them would, of itself, make the game worth the candle. So composers set to work with a will, imposing upon themselves the most difficult, varied, and intricate contrapuntal tasks, in the hope that their more and more complex musical web might in time furnish

The Old Strict Contrapuntists

material for a worthy garment for creative genius to wear. It is true that this passion for musical experimentalizing often led to purely fantastic results; many compositions proved to be, in the end, mere curiosities as technical *tours de force*. Many a contrapuntal device was found to be nothing more than a musical puzzle, of no artistic value. But the true men of genius soon enough stopped toying with such things; not sorry, however, to have made the experiment, if only to have seen the folly of it for themselves.

On the whole, it seems to me that the real value of many of these "Netherlandish tricks" has been somewhat underestimated. These apparently childish experiments, artificial and fantastic though they now seem to us, gave composers such an insight into the possibilities of Counterpoint, that it is safe to say that the great masters of later days, the Handels, Sebastian Bachs, and Beethovens, would have been able to write with far less freedom and mastery, had not their musical material been previously so thoroughly worked and rendered

The Old Strict Contrapuntists

r the old Netherlanders and Italians. is quite wrong to imagine that a eveloped technique was the only good these musical experiments in the Low s. Some compositions of that period, very intricate forms, can be ranked th what is purest and most beautiful ic. And, even though we call some r artistic failures mere bits of toying omplex contrapuntal devices, sheer muay, we must own that they are anything *ld's*-play, and, as Ambros says, that reat minds could play so.

Some not wholly random Speculations about Paganini

SOME years ago, I happened to come across an old volume of bound sheet-music, consisting for the most part of songs such as were currently sung at ballad-concerts and in drawing-rooms in the twenties and thirties of the present century. Among them was one, called *The Evening Gun*, which I seemed to remember hearing my father hum when I was a very small youngster indeed; so, for old association's sake, I took it to the pianoforte

Some not wholly random Speculations about Paganini

and tried it through. Soon my father, who happened to be in the next room, came in to ask me where I had unearthed that old thing? He said, moreover: "You sing it all wrong! I suppose the traditions of that sort of thing are all gone now, and that people would smile, if they heard those old songs sung as we used to. But songs like that used to be sung in as grand a style and with as much dramatic emphasis as anything in Wagner opera nowadays. You 've no idea how singers like Braham and others of his day would pile on the agonies!" Now, it would as soon occur to a singer to-day — unless it happened to be some five-dollars-a-seat operatic star, singing a popular encore-piece — to "pile on the agonies" in *The Evening Gun* as it would to sing *Little Bo-Peep* with tragic bathos; the song is the simplest imaginable bit of homely melody.

I was reminded of my father's remarks about it, when I soon afterwards heard the late Julius Eichberg say, one afternoon: "One thing seems to me to be entirely lost

Some not wholly random Speculations about Paganini

and out of date nowadays: and that is what we used to call the *grand violin style*. Great violin virtuosi now play, as a rule, much more great music than they used to, when I was a boy; the stuff that then formed their chief stock in trade would not be tolerated now by serious audiences. But, although they play better music nowadays, they have lost the grand old manner; you no longer hear a violinist play a phrase as if with the sublime conviction that it reached all the way from Nova Zembla to the South Pole!"

It was virtually the same thing! If we look through the old virtuoso music for the violin, the music with which men like Artôt, de Bériot, Ernst, and others — not to mention Paganini — used to drive audiences wild with enthusiasm, and wring tears from every eye, we wonder how those rather infantile cantilenas could ever have been made to sound grand. As violin music, they are much like what *The Evening Gun* was, as a song. It was the style of playing that made them sound big and impressive, as if each puny phrase

Some not wholly random Speculations about Paganini

extended "from the aurora borealis to the precession of the equinoxes." We nowadays could not listen to that sort of thing without a smile, so enormous would seem the discrepancy between matter and manner. But, in the old days, it was *de rigueur;* and, so far from smiling, people would weep delicious tears over it.

The last remnant of this sort of violin-playing in our day was probably to be found in Ole Bull. He was, to be sure, an eccentric, unquestionably great as his technical virtuosity was; ask any musician who ever heard him, and he will tell you that Ole Bull's style was, to say the least, excessive. But he had a very distinct and appealing personality, and used to make people cry by the bucketful; no man drew larger audiences, nor drove them to wilder raptures. He, too, would play a phrase as if its extent and significance were boundless; in him you still found the old grand violin style, though pushed to singular extremes.

But wait a bit! I, for one, have never been quite sure about the exact degree in which

Some not wholly random Speculations about Paganini

Ole Bull pushed this style to extremes. I have always had a suspicion — and still have it strongly — that, if any of us could be taken to Glubbdubdrib, and have Paganini's ghost brought up before us and hear him play as he used to play in the flesh, his playing would remind us more forcibly of Ole Bull than of any one else. Ole Bull has sometimes been described as "Paganini, *only more so;*" but I have my grave doubts as to the extent of the *more so.* Look carefully at the anecdotic history of the two men, and you will find quite surprising points of resemblance. The peculiar, magical influence they exerted upon the general musical public was very similar; it was, in a certain sense, diabolic and partaking of the nature of witchcraft. Both were purely solo players; Paganini, to be sure, had, at one time, a fondness for playing the first violin part in Beethoven quartets: but the result is reported to have been a tragicomic failure; none of the three other players could keep time with him, when he played as he wished to — and when he played fairly and

Some not wholly random Speculations about Paganini

squarely, he made no effect. I think that any one who ever heard Ole Bull would guess that his quartet-playing must have amounted to pretty much the same thing. Again, let any musician who never heard either Paganini or Ole Bull play look through the music each one of them wrote for himself; he will stand aghast at such music's ever having moved great crowds to enthusiasm and the verge of hysteria. Paganini's has more to say for itself than Ole Bull's; but the so much lauded magic is now discoverable in neither. This magic unquestionably resided in the overpowering personality of the two players; also, to a great extent, in their peculiar styles of playing. And what I suspect is that their styles were in many— perhaps in most — respects very similar.

One thing that leads me to this is the fact that Ole Bull, when a young man of twenty-one, often heard Paganini in Paris, and warmly admired him. To be sure, Paganini afterwards spoke of Ole Bull's style as "*original* and admirable;" but it is no great stretch of suspiciousness to guess that the "admirable"

Some not wholly random Speculations about Paganini

must have been largely of the Paganini sort, and that the "original" was the *more so.* At all events, it is not likely that a virtuoso at the impressionable age of twenty-one should have been carried away by a genius like Paganini, without the latter's style making some lasting impression upon his own. But even the fact of the personal relations between Ole Bull and Paganini was not necessary to help me to my conclusion. The internal evidence in the case is quite as strong, if not even stronger. The relations of both men to the musical public were so similar, the peculiar impression they produced upon the general run of listeners was so nearly identical, that one is well-nigh forced to conclude that both must have worked upon the public by much the same means. That Paganini's position among musicians, in his day, was less isolated than Ole Bull's, in his, need not mean much. It is true that Paganini was warmly admired by a class of musicians with whom Ole Bull was never in touch: by men like Liszt and Schumann, even by some out-and-out classi-

Some not wholly random Speculations about Paganini

cists; whereas Ole Bull had but few noteworthy professional affiliations, and was looked upon as an artist thoroughly *sui generis*, with whom the rest of the music-making world could, upon the whole, have nothing to do. But Paganini belonged to an older generation; his influence upon violinists in his day was enormous, notably upon the younger ones; and the Paganini style, or some reflection of it, must have become pretty general among virtuoso players even before the man himself had passed away. Ole Bull, on the other hand, represented the survival of this style — or of something very like it — in times when the general run of violin-playing had already taken another direction; and this necessarily gave him a more solitary position in the world of music than that of his great predecessor. What had been recognized as individuality in Paganini, was called eccentricity in him. The whole style had grown obsolete and out of date.

My reason for bringing up Ole Bull at all in this connection is that he is probably the only example either I or most of my readers

Some not wholly random Speculations about Paganini

can remember of a style of violin-playing which has long since gone out of fashion; he was undoubtedly an extreme example, but still sufficiently characteristic. And I think it more than probable that that ultra-strenuousness of style which many of us can remember in Ole Bull gives a better idea of the chief characteristics of the old "grand style" than any other modern instance that could be named. There can be little doubt, either, that Paganini himself was a rather extreme example of this style, that he was more inclined to "pile on the agonies" than any other notable violinist of his day, or after, until we come to Ole Bull. In short, although Ole Bull gave one a decidedly exaggerated idea of what the old grand style was in general, the idea he gave of what Paganini's playing was like must have been far less so; so little exaggerated withal as to be tolerably exact in its main features.

Let it not be thought that this attempt of mine to reconstruct Paganini's musical physiognomy from data, the relevancy of which

Some not wholly random Speculations about Paganini

may not be clearly apparent at first sight, is wholly gratuitous and untrustworthy. The course violin-playing has followed, from Paganini's time down to our own, is not without its parallel in that pursued by the art of singing. It is not long ago that I got a letter from an old-time opera-goer, who could still remember the Rossini operas in their heyday, and the great singers who sang in them. My correspondent called my attention, among other things, to the fact that Semiramide was written, and generally rated, as a "grand dramatic part;" it was not meant for a light, florid *soprano sfogato*, for one of the "canary-birds" of the lyric stage, but for a heavy dramatic soprano — a singer like Tietjens or Lilli Lehmann, for instance. All those florid roulades, which we now regard as the most unmitigated sort of vocal fire-works, fit only for the rapid warbling of a light, agile voice, were orginally sung more slowly, with full *vibrato*, and the most grandiose dramatic expression. It takes something of a stretch of the imagination for us to conceive nowadays of

Some not wholly random Speculations about Paganini

such things being sung dramatically and in the grand style; but that they were so sung is indubitable. The old "dramatic" *coloratura*, sung with the full voice and at a moderate rate of speed, is now pretty much a thing of the past; Semiramide's roulades are sung nowadays by light voices, in *mezza voce*, and at a break-neck pace; the old grand style and dramatic stress have passed away from music of this sort, and made place for a sheer display of vocal agility. I remember when Lilli Lehmann astonished all Paris — in the winter of 1890–91 — with her singing of Constanze's air in Mozart's *Seraglio;* one old musician exclaimed in delight: "This is the first time in many years that I have heard the old slow *coloratura*, sung with the full power of the voice, just as the great singers of old used to sing!" Some of us can remember the same great artist's singing of "*Bello a me ritorna*," in Bellini's *Norma*, at the Boston Theatre; that was great dramatic singing, full of emotional stress and the carefullest regard for expressive details; it was the old grand style,

Some not wholly random Speculations about Paganini

whereas most other singers had shown us this music only as the lightest sort of agile warbling.

Compared with what we now look upon as dramatic music, these things of Rossini's, Bellini's, and Donizetti's strike us in much the same way as the innocently puny cantilenas in the Ernst, de Bériot, or Vieuxtemps violin concertos, compared with the broader, nobler, and more expressive cantilena of the great classic and "modern-romantic" masters; and we wonder how either the Rossini or the de Bériot sort of melody could ever have laid claim to anything like grandeur. It was the then prevalent style of singing and playing that made these things seem grand and imposing; what the melody lacked in breadth and expressive calibre was made up by the style of performance, a style at once so broad and so sophisticated, so grandly large and so replete with cunning detail-work, that little we hear nowadays can give us an adequate notion of it. It was a style which, as Julius Eichberg once said, "could make a phrase that was absolutely dripping with idiocy sound like a sublime and beautiful poem!"

Some not wholly random Speculations about Paganini

To return once more to Paganini, that great man must have possessed this style, or something very like it, to perfection. If we would discover any charm, magnetism, or effectiveness in his music to-day, we can do so only by conjuring up in our imagination some faint spectre of his playing. And very likely this spectre can help us better than his playing itself could, if we were really to hear him in the flesh; for I am by no means sure that his playing, could we hear it now, would not provoke a smile in us, in spite of all the man's wondrous personal charm and magnetism. I fear the "much ado" of the style would be impotent to hide from us the "nothing" of the music.

Mendelssohn's Heart's Abhorrence

FROM many of Mendelssohn's letters we get sombre hints, and perhaps not much more than hints; yet, taken together with what we know of the man, of his artistic aims and principles, they are eloquent to whoever has ears to hear. Through many of his letters there runs a current of abhorrence of a

Mendelssohn's Heart's Abhorrence

musical something — call it essence, spirit, tendency, if you will — which had begun to show itself in his time, which it were blindness not to recognize as essentially identical with the dominant musical spirit of the present day. Mendelssohn did his best to stem its progress. It aroused a more strenuous opposition in him than anything the mere "Philistines" could do; and both by precept and example — in his compositions, in his playing, conducting, and teaching — he fought against it, tooth and nail. No doubt he combated it as something utterly bad and vicious, rather than as anything he feared might in the end prove itself strong and victorious. He only saw the beginnings of it, — in Liszt, Berlioz, and others, — and his faith was too strong for him seriously to fear that it would ever thrive. For, to his mind, it was as a blasphemy against all he held most sacred, all he believed to be truest and most eternal in Music. He could not foresee that Brahms — that is, the Brahms we now know, the Brahms of the C minor symphony — would one day come out of Schu-

Mendelssohn's Heart's Abhorrence

mann; that the Berlioz spawn was to hatch out Saint-Saëns, Bizet, and who knows whom else? that the occult forces then secretly at work were to bring forth a Richard Wagner, with his *Nibelungen*, *Tristan*, and *Kunstwerk der Zukunft*. These were all hidden from his sight by the impenetrable veil of the future. But the seeds, the first germs of these he did see; and, though far from rightly estimating their vitality, their inherent power of growth, he abhorred them with a deep-rooted abhorrence, as he would the thing unclean. What were the mere trivialities of the "Philistines" compared to this new spirit in Music, which, if it were not exorcised, must inevitably drag the whole art down to utter destruction? To him the exorcism seemed simple enough, a thing destined to be a mere matter of time. To his faith, founded on Bach, Handel, and Beethoven, this spirit might well seem moribund, even in its infancy; yet none the less detestable for all that, and something in the extermination of which it might, on the whole, be well to assist Nature.

Mendelssohn's Heart's Abhorrence

Do not think, for a moment, that I am stating the case too strongly. Of the few surviving musicians who were once intimate with Mendelssohn, who remember him in the daily activity of his musical life, I am sure there is not one but would agree that, if Mendelssohn were suddenly to return to this earth to-day and see our musical doings, hear the compositions we take delight in, know the men we crown as heroes, — our Wagners, Liszts, Berliozes, Brahmses, Dvořáks, Rubinsteins, — he would think to find himself in the midst of the crumbling ruins of a devastated art, the shattered and prostrate columns of a desecrated temple. Remember, also, I am expressing no personal opinion. I am judging no one, neither Mendelssohn nor the men who have come after him, in many ways almost supplanted him. I am merely trying to show how the general musical production of our day — above all, how the reigning musical spirit and tendency of our day — would appear if viewed through Mendelssohn's eyes. This new musical spirit, which breathes through almost all of our con-

temporary composition, sets our responsive hearts a-beating. But Mendelssohn would have looked upon it as verily *to pneuma akatharton!*

Mendelssohn's Heart's Abhorrence

JOSEF GUNGL, the Munich waltz composer, once had the ill luck unwittingly to make a boomerang joke that told most upon himself. He was rehearsing a new waltz of his own, one morning, and, stopping the orchestra just after the first phrase of the waltz proper, — after the introduction, — cried out: "Gentlemen of the first violins; at the beginning of this phrase please make your bows jump well from the string. Play it with a dash. Don't be timid about it, but *make your bows jump* on the up-stroke!" The men caught his idea easily enough; after the passage had been repeated two or three times, it went to his satisfaction. In the evening came the performance. It should be known that Gungl, like Johann Strauss and other conductors of that stamp, conducted violin in hand, now beating time with his bow, now playing himself, when any particularly tempting passage in

An Anecdote of Gungl

An Anecdote of Gungl

the first violin part came his way. At the performance in question he conducted the introduction to his new waltz with the bow, holding his violin majestically against his left hip, like a field-marshal's staff. Then came the four preparatory measures of the waltz itself, the regular "rum-tum-tum, rum-tum-tum" of the basses, second violins, and violas. These, too, he conducted, using his violin-bow like a bâton. But, just before the first phrase of the melody, where all the bows had to "jump," he put the violin up to his chin and, applying the bow to the strings, turned toward the first violins, to play the phrase with them. This brought him to a position in which he stood with his left side turned toward the audience. In the energy of his attack upon the first two notes of the phrase, — where the "jump" was to come, — his bow slipped through his fingers and sped through the air about twenty feet into the hall. Of course the audience laughed; but the orchestra, remembering Gungl's directions at rehearsal, grew suddenly mute, — for you can not play

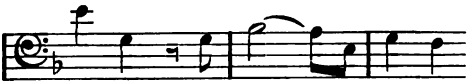
on wind instruments when you are tittering, and, as for the string-players, their arms were occupied in holding their sides. It was some time before Gungl heard the last of his "jump of the bow."

An Anecdote of Gungl

INTENTIONAL musical jokes are proverbially given to missing fire. But von Bülow once played a sly trick, in the presence of an American audience, that struck home like a flash. It was on his first visit to the United States, in 1875–76. He was playing at one of his concerts in New York, in which he was "assisted" by other talent. Just before his first number on the program, an individual credibly described as "an absolutely terrible (*schrecklich*) songstress" scorched the ears of the audience with an equally terrible song. This torture over, von Bülow comes upon the platform, seats himself at the pianoforte, and begins preluding on the theme:

Two Anecdotes of von Bülow

Two Anecdotes of von Bülow



a passage from the Ninth Symphony, to which the words are, "Brothers, no longer these tones, but let us strike up other and more joyful ones!" The audience caught on at once, and the hall fairly shook with mingled hand-clapping and laughter.

On one of von Bülow's visits to Vienna, — to give a course of pianoforte recitals there, — a *quasi*-unofficial committee of music-lovers was formed to look after the great little man, and see that he should not lack entertainment on his off nights. One evening they took him to hear the first performance of an oratorio by Anton Bruckner, the veteran Viennese composer. A few evenings later they took him to see Karl Millöcker's then new operetta, *Der Bettelstudent*. Coming out from the theatre, von Bülow expressed a wish for a glass of beer. So he was taken to a noted *Ausschank*, or beer-saloon, where, after some trouble, the party managed to find a vacant table. The beer

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was ordered and brought, cigars and cigarettes were lighted; all of a sudden one of the party whispered in von Bülow's ear: "See there! there's Millöcker himself, two tables off from us!" Von Bülow was much interested, and, after making sure that he saw the right man, sprang up from his chair and cried out: "Herr Millöcker! Herr Millöcker! I am Bülow. Delighted to make your acquaintance. Just heard your *Bettelstudent*. Immense! splendid! You ought to thank God on your knees that your name is not Bruckner!"

Brahms

BRAHMS stands, in a sense, alone among contemporary composers. One may even say that no great composer ever held exactly the position Brahms does among musicians at the present time. The peculiarity of his position lies in the fact that, though thoroughly imbued with the artistic spirit of his day, though wholly modern in feeling, Brahms's modes of musical expression seem at first sight directly to contravene this spirit, and to belong to another age. This paradox is,

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however, only apparent; for the discrepancy between his feeling and his modes of expression is merely superficial, and vanishes utterly if we take the trouble to look beneath the surface.

There can be no doubt that the composer who has left the deepest impression on the music of the present day was Richard Wagner. He was unquestionably the most complete incarnation of the modern musical spirit. He had all its strenuousness of feeling, all its nervous energy, passionateness, and restlessness; he had, too, that wonderful sense for colour, that tendency to look upon colour as one of the chief factors of artistic expression, which is almost distinctively characteristic of our age. He had the essentially modern instinct to subordinate the plastic element in Art to the emotional, to value force of expression more highly than symmetry of form, to rate truthfulness of expression higher than all else. In a word, his modes of expression were essentially dramatic. In this — apart from the vigour and calibre of his genius — we find all-sufficient explanation of the enormous influence he has

exerted upon musical composition outside of Germany; that is, in France and Italy. The opera, and dramatic composition in general, have for generations and generations held the first place in the musical activity of these countries; both France and Italy may be said to have been, in a manner, predestined to feel and respond to so potent a dramatic influence as Wagner's, even though his modes of musical expression were, in one way, quite foreign to their soil. Although what may be called Wagner's habitual musical idiom, his musical dialect, was essentially un-French and un-Italian, it was so intrinsically and thoroughly dramatic that both Italians and Frenchmen were peculiarly able to understand it.

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Now, Brahms is, at bottom, quite as modern in feeling as Wagner; in him we find all the passionate strenuousness, the emotional stress of the Bayreuth master; his fondness for forcible expression is no less marked, and he exhibits but little more inclination to sacrifice it to purely musical beauty. Neither can it be truly said that his habitual modes of musical expres-

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sion are really less appropriate to this modern spirit of his than Wagner's were. Only, the important difference is to be noted that, in Brahms, the dramatic element in expression falls out almost completely. In short, Brahms seems to be the only living composer of high distinction who has remained utterly untouched by the specifically Wagnerian influence; modern though his feeling be, his modes of musical expression are not only purely musical, but essentially undramatic in character. This is one thing that makes him as truly original and individual in his expression as Wagner was. It also abundantly explains the faint response his music has called forth in France and Italy, in both of which countries he is still virtually unknown, save to a few specialists. The undramatic quality in his musical expression renders it as incomprehensible in France or Italy as the distinctly German idiom of his music is foreign there.

Though it is unquestionable that Brahms's modes of expression are, for the most part, inveterately undramatic, and he has from the first

given ample evidence of looking upon Music as an independent and self-sufficient art, fully able to accomplish its own ends by its own means, it is none the less true that unmistakably dramatic elements, at least elements of vivid dramatic suggestiveness, crop up now and then in his writing. Now and then, if perhaps not often, one finds a passage in Brahms that plainly finds its reason of being in an underlying dramatic idea. *Brahms*

Take, for instance, the opening of the first movement of his F major symphony (No. 3, opus 90). Here we find the immediate juxtaposition of two themes, — or say, of theme and counter-theme, — one in F major, the other in F minor. Considered from a purely musical point of view, this is little else than a solecism; the unharmonic cross-relation between the A-natural of one theme and the A-flat of the other has no purely musical justification. For note that this is no mere accident of contrapuntal voice-leading, justified — like many a cross-relation in Sebastian Bach — by the nature of the musical scale itself; it is,

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on the contrary, something firmly established *in principio*, something characteristic and functional in the whole scheme and development of the movement. To explain it as a mere whimsical *tour de force*, as a curious trick in polyphonic writing that it entered the composer's head to attempt, is to shoot wide of the mark; no composer of Brahms's dignity does that sort of thing nowadays, the bare supposition is unworthy and impertinent. The only artistic justification of this extraordinary juxtaposition of two themes in the same key, but in different and conflicting modes, is that Brahms — consciously or unconsciously — looked upon each of these themes as the dramatic impersonation of a special phase of emotion, and sought to represent, in their juxtaposition and combined development, something of the nature of a conflict between two opposing principles. Call these principles Light and Darkness, Joy and Sorrow, Good and Evil, or only Major and Minor; the exact determination of them matters not a whit. All that is needful to justify the ap-

parent musical solecism is to recognize that a conflict between two opposing forces lay somehow in the composer's mind, and that his two seemingly irreconcilable themes were conceived as dramatic, or *quasi*-dramatic, embodiments of these forces. The theme starts out joyously in the major, with its glowing major 3rd; the forbidding counter-theme creeps upon it from below, in the minor, as if to say, with Iago: *Brahms*

. . . O, you are well-tun'd now!
But I 'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.

Again, one finds in Brahms's music frequent moments of such vivid, irresistible, extra-musical — poetic or picturesque — suggestiveness, that one can hardly escape the suspicion that some corresponding extra-musical image must have hovered, at least sub-consciously, before the composer's mental vision as he wrote them.

But more definitely dramatic than this Brahms has never been. Whatever of extra-musical suggestiveness one may find in his

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writing at times, he has given no outside clew to lead the listener to a specific interpretation of a composition, and has never written anything even distantly approaching "program-music;" few composers have written so exceedingly few works with suggestive titles as he. On the whole, he invests his music with somewhat less frequent romantic, extra-musical suggestiveness than one finds either in Bach or Mendelssohn, let alone Schumann. His music, in general, is pure music and little or nothing else.

It has often been wondered at that a man of Brahms's power, genius, and originality should have done so little pioneer work in the way of seeking for and developing new musical forms; that he should still be content to work, almost without exception, in the old traditional cyclical forms of sonata, symphony, concerto, and their correlatives in the domain of instrumental chamber-music, and evince an equal indisposition to seek for new forms in his vocal writing. But it seems to me that those who have wondered at this fail to appreciate the originality of the work Brahms has

done in these forms; he treats them with absolute freedom, in some ways with conspicuous novelty of conception; that this freedom of treatment is in no wise revolutionary nor subversive, does not make it any the less free. What Brahms has to say is indefeasibly his own; and his finding that he can say it freely and completely in the traditional cyclical forms does not detract one whit from his originality. He is far more at home in these forms than Schumann was; his instinct seems to run in parallel lines with their very scheme. They are no shackles whatever on his inventiveness nor his imagination; he seems to have taken to them naturally, and to express himself as easily in them as the old classic masters themselves. One can, therefore, see no good reason for his abandoning them.

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Brahms's work is in general characterized by enormous solidity and stoutness of construction. In his earlier period he threw himself somewhat open to the charge of abstruseness; yet, though this charge is not

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wholly unfounded, it has often been exaggerated. His whole style was so individual, and withal so novel, that it took the world some time to get used to it; a good deal that seemed abstruse and incomprehensible in his earlier works seems quite clear now. In this matter he has had the same experience that all original composers have had, time out of mind. Still, it is not to be denied that there was some abstruseness of style in the works of his earlier period, beside not a little of youthful "storm and stress." But it may be said of him, as Schumann once said of Mendelssohn, "the more he writes, the clearer and more transfigured (*immer klarer und verklärter*) does his expression become!" Especially in his later works does Brahms show himself to be well-nigh the only composer since Beethoven who has known how to preserve something of the old Hellenic serenity in his music. Even Schumann did not quite succeed in this; and, as for others since his day, their tendency has been in the opposite direction.

Although Brahms is noteworthy for adhe-

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ring to the traditional cyclical forms, the freedom with which he treats them is none the less noticeable. And, though he in general carefully preserves both the chief outlines and the distinctive characteristics of whatever form he may have selected, his choice of forms — say, for the separate movements of a symphony or quartet — is at times strikingly unconventional. His avoidance of the traditional minuet and scherzo forms is peculiarly noteworthy; in all four of his symphonies there is not one movement that can rightly be called a scherzo. One movement in his D major symphony (No. 2, opus 73) has some of the characteristics of the minuet; but its rhythm equally recalls the old *Ländler* waltz. The finale of his E minor symphony (No. 4, opus 98) is a set of variations on an eight-measure passacaglia; a hitherto unheard-of form for a symphonic finale! Characteristic also is Brahms's fondness for moderate *Allegros;* the modern "slow *Allegro*" might almost be called his natural gait. He applies it to the first movements of three of his four symphonies;

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only the third begins with a frank *Allegro con brio.* As a rule, it is only in short middle movements — substituted for the traditional scherzo — and now and then in a finale that he writes in a really brisk tempo. It is noticeable that, whenever he does write a genuine *Allegro molto* or *Presto,* Hungarian traits of melody or rhythm are pretty sure to crop up sooner or later. But his music is in general essentially Teutonic; Slavic or Magyar touches are to be found only here and there.

It was for some time a legend that the intellectual element largely preponderated over the emotional in Brahms's writing. Some tinge of reason may seem to have been given to this legend by the fact that his music always is profoundly intellectual; perhaps also by the essentially undramatic nature of his habitual modes of expression, by a certain reserve of style and an occasional touch of something very like asceticism. But the legend is really none the less ridiculous, and hardly calls for refutation; for it is of the things that die of themselves. With all its intellectuality,

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Brahms's music is rich in the truest and deepest emotional quality, internal warmth, what the Germans call *Gemüth*, and passion. The charge of "cold intellectuality," brought against Brahms, belongs to the same category as the charge of melodic poverty that has been brought against every original composer who ever wrote: a flash in the pan of purblind criticism.

Tchaikovsky in Paris

I HAPPENED to be one of the audience at Tchaikovsky's first concert in Paris in the course of the winter of 1890–91. It was one of the regular Sunday afternoon concerts of the Association Artistique (better known as the Colonne Concerts) at the Châtelet. Colonne's orchestra was in full force, and the Russian composer conducted an almost endless program of his own orchestral works, interspersed with a few songs. I now forget what the program was, only two numbers remaining fixed in my memory. One of these was a set of variations on an original theme; the other, not especially interesting in itself, was still

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interesting as an example of the vast difference in some respects between musical life in Paris and in any important musical centre in the United States. This number was the (here) familiar *Andante* in B-flat major from the D major quartet, opus 11, played by all the strings of the orchestra. Against it was marked on the program: "*Première audition à Paris.*" Great heavens! We in America had been hearing this poor little *Andante* scraped to death for at least fifteen years, — it was first played in Boston by the Listemann Quartet at one of von Bülow's concerts in the Music Hall in 1875–76, — it has become the very "*Stella confidente*" of quartet-players, to the point that no self-respecting quartet dares nowadays put it on the program of anything more serious than the Commencement Day of a young ladies' seminary; and the Parisians are just getting their first taste of it now! I should probably not have noticed this particularly, had I not heard in the course of the same season the "first performance in Paris" of Niels Gade's C minor

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symphony, Karl Goldmark's *Ländliche Hochzeit*, and Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, and been credibly informed that the only important orchestral work by Brahms that had ever been given there was his D major symphony! I began to think that we in America were not so very much behind the times, after all. But this is merely by the way.

Tchaikovsky's appearance at the head of an orchestra was striking. Tall and slim of figure, with short, thick iron-grey hair, moustache, and imperial, there was something military in his bearing, in the grave, dignified response he bowed to his reception by the audience. You felt instinctively that here was a man who knew what he was about, and was not to be trifled with. It was just at the beginning of the Russian enthusiasm in Paris; and his reception, as he stepped up to the conductor's desk, was of the heartiest. But, though by no means ungracious in manner, he looked tolerably used to that sort of thing, and as if, on the whole, hand-clapping was not what he had mainly come for. He seemed

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to take his reception for granted, much as a crowned head would have done, and lost no time in rapping his orchestra up to the "ready!" point. His beat in conducting was unostentatious, he used his left arm but little. But his down-beat was admirably clear and precise, and, whenever he gave the signal for the thunder to break loose, the whole orchestra seemed to shiver. It soon became evident that the man was positively an electric battery, launching lightning-flashes right and left from that terrible bâton of his, egging his men on to the utmost fury of fiery intensity.

I shall never forget the terrific onslaught of the first violins upon one variation in rapid sixteenth-notes. It was like Anton Rubinstein, at his devilmost, playing the pianoforte! Yet throughout the concert the orchestra played with as fine a finish as I ever heard them do under Colonne, their regular conductor. It took no Russophilism to help him work the audience up to the frenetic pitch of delight. Remember that the present Russian school, with Tchaikovsky at their head, owe

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much to Berlioz; and Berlioz's music is particularly popular in France. In listening to these Russian works, new to them though they might be, the audience still could feel themselves to be on tolerably familiar ground. Whatever was exotic in the style was tempered to them by many well-known and favourite elements; and the superior solidity of musical workmanship, the finer depth of inspiration, — compared with most of the music recently written by the Berlioz tail in Paris, — all combined to make even a ready-made enthusiasm easy to blow to a white heat.

And Tchaikovsky did this as few men could have done! No doubt he showed himself at his best; for, when Gallic enthusiasm reaches the boiling-point, there is no possibility of mistaking it: it is of the most frankly outspoken sort, and during exciting passages the audience work nearly as hard as the orchestra, letting out the fervour that is in them through no silent safety-valve. This can not fail to react favourably upon a conductor; Tchaikovsky and his Châtelet audience were like two logs in the fire, mutually keeping each other hot!

Musical Reminiscences of Boston Thirty Years Ago

THESE are, in the strictest sense of the term, what they purport to be: *Reminiscences.* I have consulted nothing but my own memory.

It is hard for us older ones to realize that a whole generation of concert-goers has sprung up, who do not remember the old symphony concerts of the Harvard Musical Association — let alone those of the older Orchestral Union and the still older Germania. I can still remember the Germania concerts under Karl Bergmann's régime, just before he went to New York and was succeeded by Mr. Zerrahn. I can not, to be sure, remember much about them, only one or two incidents being firmly engraved on my memory. At one of the public afternoon rehearsals, — for we had afternoon rehearsals then, as now, — all the seats on the floor of the Music Hall had been taken up, and the small audience occupied the galleries. There used to be no printed programs at these rehearsals, but Bergmann would announce the several numbers *viva voce* — often in the most remarkable English. One

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of the numbers on the occasion I now speak of was the *Railway Galop*,— composer forgotten, — during the playing of which a little mock steam-engine kept scooting about (by clock-work?) on the floor of the hall, with black cotton-wool smoke coming out of its funnel. I have a vague recollection, too, of another rehearsal, just before which something nefarious had happened to the heating apparatus, so that the temperature was down in the forties. Dresel played a pianoforte concerto with his overcoat on, the sleeves partly rolled up, and the bright red satin lining flashing in the faces of the audience. Brignoli sang something, too; in a black cape that made him look like Don Ottavio — and persisted in singing with his back to the audience.

With Mr. Zerrahn's accession to the conductorship comes an hiatus in my memory; I was in Europe, and my reminiscences knot on again with the year 1860. Boston then had the Orchestral Union, the Handel & Haydn Society, the Mendelssohn Quintet Club, and, for pianoforte-playing, what was sometimes

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jokingly called the Ottoman Quartet. The four leading resident pianists — Otto Dresel, B. J. Lang, Hugo Leonhard, and J. C. D. Parker — were fond of playing pieces for two pianofortes, eight hands (*a otto mani*), in public now and then; hence the nickname, with which Dresel's Christian name may also have had something to do. The Mendelssohn Quintet Club, the only organization which gave instrumental chamber-music in those days, consisted of Wilhelm Schulze (*first violin*), Carl Meisel (*second violin*), Thomas Ryan (*first viola* and *clarinet*), Göring (*second viola* and *flute*), and Wulf Fries ('*cello*). Only two of these artists were original members of the Club: Ryan and Fries. August Fries, the original first violin, had gone back to Norway (or was it to Sweden or Denmark?), and the Hungarian, Riha — so spelled out of compassion for Anglo-Saxon inability to wrestle successfully with his real name, Drzjr — was dead. I think he was one of the original violas; perhaps second violin. Schulze was also leading first violin in the orchestra, as

Ryan and Wulf Fries were leading viola and 'cello.

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What a time of it that old Orchestral Union had! Their concerts came on Wednesday afternoons, and were well attended at first. But, with the war, the audiences began to drop off, as times grew harder. The orchestra was an exceedingly variable quantity: there were only two horns, and a second bassoon was not to be thought of. The second bassoon-part had to be played on a 'cello; and uninitiated visitors used sometimes to wonder what that solitary 'cello was doing in the midst of the wood-wind. Hamann, the first horn, had little technique, but a good tone, and was moreover an excellent musician; he had a fad of playing the easier Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven horn-parts on a real plain horn, which he had had made to order, and regarded with unconcealed affection. I think there were hardly ever more than six first violins: I certainly remember one performance of Beethoven's A major symphony with only three first violins and two second. The soli-

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tary bassoonist was conspicuous by his singularity, not by his virtuosity. At a benefit concert tendered to Mr. Zerrahn, at which a small picked "chorus of young ladies" sang the "Lift thine eyes" terzet from *Elijah*, the few measures of introductory tenor recitative were played as a bassoon solo. The hapless bassoonist got most of the notes wrong; I do not think I ever heard such a tremulous tone issue from any other wind instrument.

But nothing could fluster Mr. Zerrahn; I never saw him lose his head, nor any performance come to grief under his bâton. And, with the orchestral material and few rehearsals of those days, things were on the verge of coming to grief pretty often. At one of the Handel & Haydn festivals — I think, the first one, the demi-centennial — the then famous boy-soprano, Richard Coker, sang Meyerbeer's "*Robert, toi que j'aime*" at an afternoon concert. He was accompanied on the pianoforte by his father. When about half-way through the air, Coker, Sr., discovered to his dismay that the remaining sheets of the

music were missing; Mr. Zerrahn immediately sprang to the conductor's desk, waved his bâton, and the rest of the air was accompanied by the orchestra from memory.

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I remember another instance of Mr. Zerrahn's presence of mind. It was at a performance of Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise* by the Handel & Haydn. The tenor had just finished that air with the incomprehensible words, closing with the oft-repeated question, "Watchman, will the night soon pass?" In reply to this, the soprano should strike in unaccompanied, in D major, with "The night is departing!" twice repeated; the wood-wind coming in *piano* on the second "departing," and the whole orchestra *fortissimo* on the final syllable. Well, on this occasion, the soprano was standing a little farther forward on the stage than Mr. Zerrahn; so she could not see his beat without turning her head. She struck in bravely with her "The night is departing;" but unfortunately not in D major — it was fairly and squarely C major: a whole tone flat! A shudder ran through the

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orchestra and a good part of the audience: what was Mr. Zerrahn to do with the ensuing chorus in D major? His mind was made up in a second; he motioned to the wood-wind not to come in with their chords, and stood there, waiting patiently for the hapless soprano to finish her phrase, and let the orchestra come in with its D major *fortissimo* afterwards, instead of on the last syllable. And now came one of the most comical tugs of war I have ever witnessed between singer and conductor. Of course the soprano was wholly unaware of having made a mistake; so, not hearing the usual 6–4 chord on her second "departing," she thought the wind-players must have counted their rests wrong, and held her high G — which ought to have been an A — with a persistency worthy of a better cause, to let them catch up with her. She held that G on and on, looking as if she would burst; but still no 6–4 chord! At last — it seemed like hours — human lungs could hold out no longer, and the breathless soprano landed panting with her final "ting" on C-

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natural, amid a death-like silence of the orchestra. You could have heard a pin drop. Just as she was turning round to see why she had thus been left in the lurch by the accompaniment, Mr. Zerrahn's bâton came down with a swish, and the orchestra thundered out its D major; this unlooked for tonality evidently gave the poor soprano a shock, as if a glass of ice-water had suddenly been thrown in her face. At last she realized what she had been doing.

We had opera in those days, too. Max Maretzeck was the great operatic gun then, both as impresario and conductor; I think his company still kept up the old title of "Havana Troupe." The Boston Theatre was its battle-field; the dress-circle — that is, all of the first balcony behind the first two rows of seats — was cut up into open boxes, the partitions coming up no higher than the arms of the seats. But I never could discover that people "took a box;" the seats were sold separately, just as if the partitions did not exist. The entrance to the top gallery was fifty cents,

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though it was afterwards raised to a dollar. The opera orchestras were pretty small, and not of the best quality; but, as the huge modern opera scores had not come in, the parts were generally well enough filled. There was a bass-tuba for *Robert le Diable*, and there were generally four horns.

The mise en scène was, for the most part, primitive enough. The scenery generally belonged to the theatre, and in those days the Boston Theatre had not launched out upon its gorgeous stage settings — except for things like the *Black Crook* or *White Fawn*. The "*bujo loco*" of the septet in *Don Giovanni* was always represented by a blue-and-gold baronial hall; and who that ever saw it can forget that street-scene, with the red brick wall, which figured in almost every opera, no matter in what part of the world nor in what age the scene was laid?

The costumes belonged either to the principal artists or to the company, and were of varying degrees of splendour. There was one fixed rule: the soprano heroine invariably wore a

décolleté ball-dress — white, if Fortune smiled; black, if down on her luck. Epoch, country, in-doors or out-of-doors, rain or shine, made no difference; the heroine — unless she was a peasant — stuck to that ball-dress as for dear life.

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But the performances were often capital, and there was much good singing. I can just remember Medori, an heroic soprano of equally heroic proportions, generally reputed to be second only to Adelina Patti. She had a bad *tremolo* in her otherwise fine voice, when I heard her; but was unmistakably an artist. Her successor in the grand soprano parts was Carrozzi-Zucchi, a fiery, beetle-browed Italian, with apparently unlimited vocal power, and flamboyantly dramatic in her singing. If I remember aright, she had the failing of being unable to pronounce the consonant *R*. I am pretty sure it was she, for one incident I remember tallies exactly with her style. It was in Verdi's *Ernani:* Elvira had just finished the slow *cantilena* — "*Ernani, involami*" — of her grand aria, and was about to launch forth

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upon the *cabaletta*, which begins "*Tutto sprezzo che d' Ernani non favella a questo cuore* (I despise all that does not speak of Ernani to this heart)." Here Carrozzi-Zucchi's defective *R* played her a trick. In her most furiously dramatic manner, with a fine scowl darkening her expressive face, she rushed up to the footlights and thundered forth "*Tutto* sp'ezzo *che d' E'nani, &c.* (I *smash* all that, &c.)," to the blank astonishment of a little Italian who happened to be in the seat next mine; I overheard him exclaim under his breath, "*Davvero spezzarebbe tutto!* (Indeed she would smash everything!)."

The first cast of Gounod's *Faust* in Boston was memorable. It has seldom been equalled in our city.

Faust	MAZZOLENI
Mefistofele	BIACHI
Valentino	BELLINI
Margherita	KELLOGG
Siebel	SULZER

It was announced on the play-bills that "In order to give éclat to the performance, Signor

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Bellini has consented to accept the comparatively small part of Valentine." Mazzoleni was no longer in his first youth; he was a robust tenor, with a rather too metallic voice of very peculiar quality, and sang uncommonly well; he was a good actor, and his love-making was superb — indeed he had been a lawyer by profession, before taking to the boards, and was an adept at pleading. Until Capoul came, years after, no other such stage lover was to be seen here in opera. Biachi was a rich-voiced *basso cantante* and also an excellent actor; I doubt if his Mefistofele has been surpassed here since; he gave the part its full caustic humour, but without a suspicion of buffoonery. Bellini was a conventional actor, though he had a grand stage-presence and manner; but he had the most glorious baritone voice I ever heard in my life, and was a capital singer. And how charming Kellogg was in those, her younger, days! when she sang Margherita in *Faust*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* and *Fra Diavolo*, Amina in *la Sonnambula*, Elvira in *i Puritani*, and had not yet aspired to the heavy

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dramatic business! Her light soprano voice was purity itself, and she sang to perfection. Her Margherita stands unapproached in my memory — that is, unapproached from a Barbier-Carré-Gounod point of view; for there was nothing of Goethe's Gretchen in it. Enrichetta Sulzer — Mrs. Annibale Biachi in private life — was in no wise remarkable, though she sang Siebel well enough. But the whole cast worked together like a charm; the ensemble was admirable.

The success of *Faust* was immediate and overwhelming; probably Goethe's poem was largely answerable for it, for Gounod's music was in a then new and unfamiliar style, and old opera-goers used to complain that "there was only one tune" — Siebel's flower-song "in the whole work." The soldiers' chorus was regularly encored.

Singers like Mazzoleni, Bellini, Biachi, Medori, Carrozzi-Zucchi, and others — I wonder, by the way, if any one still remembers the stentor-voiced Maccaferi, who used to make the rafters tremble in Petrella's *Ione* —

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were of the bird-of-passage sort; they seldom appeared for more than two or three seasons. But Brignoli we had nearly always with us — that is, when the opera came. His was a phenomenal voice; of the pure lyric tenor quality, but of robust calibre and power. His singing was the perfection of vocal art; he could sing anything, from Elvino to Manrico, from Don Ottavio to Ernani. He had little sensibility and no dramatic power; he seldom, if ever, sang with what is commonly called "expression;" but the silvery beauty of his voice and the perfection of his vocal art and phrasing made up for it. He could probably have shared with Rubini the well-earned reputation of being the worst actor that ever walked the boards. He did not even try to act; now and then, in love-scenes, he would take the soprano's hand and clasp it to his expansive chest — at times to the soprano's conspicuous discomfiture; for, when Brignoli had once got hold of it, it was no easy matter to get it away again — but this was about all he ever did. His stage walk was notorious; one would have

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thought that gait acquired in following the plough. He was the idol of the public. Curiously enough, with all his consciousness of artistic mastery and popularity, he never could get over his stage fright; he was the most impudent-looking man in the world, but really one of the most timid. Adelaide Phillipps once told me that she often had actually to push him out from the side-scenes, or he would never have screwed up the courage to go on.

Morensi, the mezzo-soprano, was also an excellent singer. I heard her years after she left this country, with Adelina Patti, Fraschini, and Delle Sedie, in *Rigoletto* at the Italiens in Paris. She was a great Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, although she conscientiously left out every high B-flat in her part, and put a rest in its place. Her voice only went up to A. Susini, the old basso of the Havanna Troupe, was rather in the sear and yellow leaf then; I only heard him once or twice in *buffo* parts. He married Miss Hinkley, whose untimely death cut short a brilliantly promising career.

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Adelaide Phillipps was as much a regular operatic stand-by in those days as Brignoli himself. She began as a dancer at the Boston Museum, but soon developed a rich, luscious contralto voice, which she had admirably trained. It was probably to her early ballet training that she owed her conspicuously commanding bearing and grace of movement on the stage. She was a grand singer and one of the best actresses of the day on the lyric boards. Her Maffeo Orsini, in *Lucrezia Borgia*, will never be forgotten by any who saw it. Probably no one since Alboni ever sang "*Il segreto per esser felici*" with such rollicking dash and cavalier elegance as she. Trebelli was not in it with her!

The operatic repertory was not very varied. Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi were the chief stand-bys then. Gounod's *Faust* was the most successful, if not the only successful, novelty; Meyerbeer's *Dinorah* did not take well with the public, and Petrella's *Ione* was but a flash in the pan. Two standard operas, very popular then, seem quite lost to the pres-

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ent repertory; a loss much to be regretted, for they are truly great works. These were Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* and Verdi's *Ernani*. The prologue to *Lucrezia* is an unsurpassed gem in its way; and the third and fourth acts of *Ernani* contain some of the greatest music Verdi ever wrote. Donizetti's *Poliuto* and *Dom Sebastiano* seemed for a moment on the brink of success; but they soon ceased to draw well. The surest cards, after all, were Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Verdi's *il Trovatore*. The trouble with *Don Giovanni* was its enormous cast: "*lauter premiers sujets!* (nothing but leading artists!)," as the good Maretzek would sadly exclaim. I remember, however, one admirable performance of it under Maretzek, with a cast that has seldom been beaten here.

Don Giovanni . . .	BELLINI
Il Commendatore . .	WEINLIG (I think)
Donna Anna . . .	MEDORI
Don Ottavio . . .	LOTTI
Donna Elvira . . .	STOCKTON
Leporello	BIACHI
Zerlina	KELLOGG

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Henrietta Stockton was the one weak spot in the cast; Lotti was fairly adequate, and the others were superb. Bellini, to be sure, would insist upon rattling off "*Finch' han dal vino*" at lightning speed, and giving out a stentorian F-sharp in the closing cadence of the serenade. Medori's "*Or sai chi l'onore*" fairly took your breath away with its dramatic fire. But we had no good Donna Elvira till Morensi came, a year or two later.

Bellini's *Sonnambula*, *Norma*, and *i Puritani* held their own well and were very popular. Rossini's *Barbiere* drew splendidly, but was seldom given — for lack of good florid tenors; "*Ecco ridente*" was a stumbling-block hard to get over! Ah! I had almost forgotten another successful and delightful novelty: the Riccis' *Crispino e la Comare*. This charming little *opera buffa* had a great run; Clara Louise Kellogg was a simply bewitching Annetta.

Evening dress was rather the exception than the rule at the opera in those days, although the gas was not turned down during the acts;

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and gay opera-cloaks would alternate with waterproofs — those waterproofs for which the Boston female has become so justly famous.

German opera was represented by the Annschütz company, with Bertha Johannsen, Marie Frederici — her maiden name was Friedrichs, and she was Mrs. Himmer in private life, — Pauline Canissa, Franz Himmer, Theodor Habelmann, and Joseph Hermanns. Johannsen was a really great artist, and sang Donna Anna, Beethoven's Leonore, and other grand soprano parts superbly; she was a mighty actress, too. Frederici made an enormous hit as Agathe, in *der Freischütz*, and was much admired in Gounod's Margarethe; she had a wondrously rich mezzo-soprano, running up to high B-flat and with contralto fullness of tone down to G; but she was, on the whole, little of an artist, and only did what she was told, with poll-parrot fidelity. Hermanns — who had been picked out of the Covent Garden chorus on account of his grand bass voice and imposing stature — made a tremendous hit as Mephistopheles. His

voice had a peculiar resonant quality — very much for a bass what Mazzoleni's was for a tenor — and people used to take out their watches to time his trill in the serenade. He was next to nothing of an artist ; but I fancy I was alone in finding his Mephistopheles execrable. The only part he did really well was Rocco, in *Fidelio.*

Faust — the Walpurgisnight-scene in which was persistently advertised as a special feature, and never once given, — *Fidelio,* the *Freischütz,* Boieldieu's *Weisse Dame,* Nicolai's *Lustigen Weiber von Windsor,* and Mozart's *Don Juan* were the favourite operas. When Carl Formes was added to the troupe, a year or two later, Meyerbeer's *Robert der Teufel* was revived for him; his Bertrand was a wonder of singing and acting. And to hear him rattle off "*Schaudernd zittern meine Glieder, Angst schlägt meinen Muth darnieder*" in the septet in *Don Juan* — in steady *crescendo* up to *fortissimo,* and with every syllable distinct — was a caution! He was a great artist, although on the downward path when

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I heard him. Advancing age had a peculiar effect upon him: it did not diminish the beauty nor volume of his voice in the least, but it gradually robbed him of the power of singing in tune.

One of the great events of the period about which I am now writing — 1860–70 in round numbers — was the demi-centennial festival of the Handel & Haydn Society in 1865. What I especially remember about this particular festival was the orchestra. The orchestral resources of Boston had never been conspicuous, either for quality or numbers; since the beginning of the war, the orchestra of the Orchestral Union and those which made us yearly visits with opera companies had been miserably small. I doubt if any of my generation, certainly of those whose experience did not extend to New York or the other side of the Atlantic, had ever heard a well-balanced orchestra. Our notions of orchestral effect were derived from what we heard. I remember distinctly how impossible it was for me, at the time I speak of, to under-

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stand what older musicians meant by calling the strings the "main power" in an orchestra. In all orchestras I had heard, the wood-wind — let alone the brass and percussion — was more powerful dynamically than the often ridiculously small mass of strings; especially as the then wind-players seldom cultivated the art of playing *piano*. But, for this demi-centennial of the Handel & Haydn, our local orchestra was increased to nearly a hundred by the addition of players engaged from New York and elsewhere. I shall never forget the overwhelming effect of the third and fourth measures of the symphony to Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise* — where the unison trombone-phrase of the first two measures is answered *fortissimo* in full harmony by the entire orchestra. Nothing I have heard since, in Berlioz's or Wagner's most resounding instrumentation, has sounded so positively tremendous to me as this first onslaught of an orchestra with a large mass of strings! This was the beginning, not of large, but of what might be called normal orchestras in Boston. At the sym-

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phony concerts of the Harvard Musical Association, founded not long afterward, the orchestra ranged from fifty to sixty players (for full modern scores); before the Handel & Haydn demi-centennial, our orchestra had run as low as twenty-four, and seldom exceeded thirty-five. When we had eight first and eight second violins, we thought no small beer of ourselves! The advance in quality was, however, by no means commensurate with the increase in numbers; for years our orchestra remained a good deal of a "scratch team" — what a distinguished visiting violinist once called "*une agrégation fortuite d'éléments hétérogènes* (a fortuitous aggregation of heterogeneous elements)."

About this time, and earlier, star-concerts were all the rage; and I must say — due allowance being made for the inveterately inartistic plan — we had some pretty good ones. As opera managers did not quite dare to engage stars of the very first magnitude for their troupes, — not caring to compete with London, Madrid, and St. Petersburg in the matter

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of salaries, — it was at these star-concerts that we first heard some of the greatest singers of the day. If their success in concert was unquestionable, the opera people would then screw up courage to engage them next season. One of the best and most successful of these concert combinations was the Bateman troupe — as it was also one of the most ill-assorted from an artistic point of view. It brought us Euphrosyne Parepa, then at the apex of her glory; Carl Rosa, the violinist, then at the beginning of his career; Eduard Dannreuther, the pianist; Lévy, the eighth world-wonder of the cornet-à-pistons. Rosa was decidedly more of an artist than he was a violin virtuoso; but we thought a good deal of his playing then, and he certainly played a deal of good music. He was engaged as solo violinist at one of the first Harvard Musical concerts; and the applause knew no bounds when, after playing his last solo, he, in the fullness of his artistic heart, took a seat beside Wilhelm Schulze at the head of the first violins, to play the third *Leonore* overture —

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the last number on the program — with the orchestra. Dannreuther was a classical pianist, though by no means a virtuoso; he soon left the company in disgust with his surroundings, and went back to England. Parepa and Lévy were the great guns of the troupe. Parepa's wonderful voice, — her G *in alt* figured on all the posters, — perfect method, and grand, if rather cold, style carried everything before them; and Lévy's double-tonguing in triplets turned the popular head as nothing else could. Encores were Article XL. in the creed of audiences then, and I doubt if Parepa made as many conquests with "Ocean, thou mighty monster!" as with "Five o'clock in the Morning." John L. Hatton was the accompanist of the troupe. I remember one concert at which Bateman, in his most First-Gentleman-in-Europe manner, stepped forward on the platform, medical certificate in hand, deploring in tragic accents worthy of his daughter the sudden indisposition of an important member of the company, and winding up with the announcement: "Madame Parepa, with her

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usual nobility of nature, has kindly consented to stand in the gap; and my old friend, *your* old friend, EVERYBODY'S old friend, John Hatton, will sing his inimitable 'Little Man dressed all in Grey.'" And he did sing it, too, to every one's delight, accompanying himself, and preluding it with the first few measures of Bach's G minor fugue!

The Great Organ seldom figured at variety concerts. I believe an extra charge was made for the use of it, and managers thought they could do quite as well without it. But organ concerts came thick and fast; almost every organist in the city and suburbs had his turn at the big (and unwieldy) instrument. After a while, it began to form part of the most adventurous combinations; I remember one evening when a fantasia on themes from Wallace's *Maritana* was played as a duet for mouth-harmonica and the Great Organ; a combination, as the program informed us, "never before attempted in the history of Music!"

The Handel & Haydn demi-centennial came

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in the spring of 1865; before the year was out, the Harvard Musical Association began its symphony concerts — or did these concerts begin after New Year? I forget; at any rate, they began either in December, 1865, or in January, 1866. But, before speaking of these concerts, I must mention another institution which passed away a year or two before, and had done a great deal of good amid hard struggles and difficulties. This was the old Philharmonic. I can not remember exactly on what basis the old Philharmonic concerts — not to be confounded with those of the Boston Philharmonic Society, founded much later — existed; I am under the impression that they were mainly, if not wholly, a private enterprise of Mr. Zerrahn's. They were subscription concerts, given in the evening, with (I think) a preliminary public rehearsal in the afternoon. They were given in the Music Hall, for the most part, though at times in the Boston Theatre, and were for years the principal orchestral concerts in the city. The orchestra was somewhat larger than that of the

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Orchestral Union. The concerts foundered during the hardest years of the war, a little after the Wednesday afternoon concerts of the Orchestral Union had struck colours; when they stopped, I think the Orchestral Union plucked up courage again, and continued giving concerts until the H. M. A. began.

The symphony concerts of the Harvard Musical Association began flourishingly, and their success went on increasing for some years. Crowded houses were the rule. This success did not, however, continue far into the seventies; the audiences began to drop off, subscriptions to decrease, and little by little the stigmata of unpopularity began to show themselves on the institution. There were several reasons for this, most, if not all, of which may be summed up in the one fact that the H. M. A. concerts were the connecting link between the old and the new musical Boston. They represented our transition period.

The Association started out on pretty severe classical and conservative principles; and, when the time came for going with the general cur-

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rent of musical thought and feeling, they continued to be strongly conservative and even reactionary. The Head-Centre — if not the heart and soul — of the Association was the late John S. Dwight; and his musical principles are still too well known to need dilating upon here. Many influential members of the Association were eager to have it join hands with what was then generally called the party of progress; but Dwight was inexorable, and would not yield an inch. No committee-man could, in the end, make headway against his triumphant "system of inertia;" the spirit of the concerts remained conservative to the end.

Another reason for the growing unpopularity of the concerts was still less in the Association's power to overcome. In 1869 Theodore Thomas began making our city flying visits with his New York orchestra, then unquestionably one of the finest in the world; and his concerts gave us Bostonians some rather humiliating lessons in the matter of orchestral technique. The H. M. A. was naturally slow in taking these lessons to heart; indeed it only

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did take them to heart when it was already too late to profit by them, after the yearly income from the concerts had so dwindled away that it was well-nigh hopeless to think of affording the needful money for engaging better orchestral material and having more rehearsals. In fact, the only practical influence I can remember the Thomas concerts having upon the H. M. A. was that, for some years, both conductor and a large part of the orchestra seemed bitten with the extreme-*pianissimo* mania; we had a series of the most astounding half-audible *pianissimo* string-effects, even in Beethoven symphonies. That silly little muted-string transcription of Schumann's *Träumerei*, which Thomas played again and again, had turned all heads! Still the public could not but draw its own comparisons between the playing of the Thomas Orchestra and that of our own; and such comparisons only added to the already serious unpopularity of the H. M. A. "Dull as a symphony concert" almost passed into a proverb.

Of course the opposition somewhat overdid

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the business. The H. M. A. orchestra did not play by any means so badly as some people would have had you believe; neither were the programs so dull and "ultra-classical" as they were commonly reputed to be. Not a little of the "New Music" was played; and, curiously enough, — considering the loud and repeated demands for it, — generally very coldly received by the audience. There was really a good deal of variety in the H. M. A. programs. When Wilhelm Gericke first came here and looked over the programs of the H. M. A. for the seventeen years of their existence, his astonishment at the vast field covered by them was unbounded. "I don't see what is left for me to do!" he exclaimed, "you seem to have had everything here already, much more than wé ever had in Vienna!" But the public was disgruntled, the Association had got a bad name, and people in general noticed the old things on the programs much more than they did the new ones. The rats were leaving the sinking ship, and fewer and fewer music-lovers cared to book for a passage.

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Yet, in face of all this, one curious fact remains: through the whole seventeen years of its symphony concerts, the Harvard Musical Association came out ahead pecuniarily; with all the miserably small audiences of the later years, it never lost a cent on its concerts! The success of the first few years was enough to carry the concerts through, besides allowing the Association to spend a tidy sum every year on increasing its library.

I like now to look back upon some of the enthusiasms of those earlier years of the H. M. A. concerts; for we had our enthusiasms then, as now. Few musical events in this city have surpassed — in the *furor* of enthusiasm it called forth — the first performance of Niels Gade's C minor symphony. That scherzo, with its ever-recurring joyous refrain, carried everything before it! Schumann's *Genoveva* overture made almost as strong and unexpected an impression, if in a more restricted circle; I think the *Genoveva* marked the turning-point in the public's attitude toward Schumann here. Before it, the general run of music-lovers in-

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clined to look upon Schumann as incomprehensibly new-fangled; after it, people began to prick up their ears and listen to him with more and more sympathy and comprehension. The *Genoveva* was even enough to induce them to listen respectfully to his C major symphony, which was brought out here at the same concert — and, by the way, how like Pandemonium-let-loose the first movement sounded, with the then playing! Like the very rags and tatters of music! Goldmark's *Sakuntala* turned nearly all heads; Mr. Zerrahn and the orchestra were particularly wild over it, and I think it was given three times in half a season. Saint-Saëns's *Phaéton* had an almost equal success, and notably with the players. I remember Schulze saying, one day after a rehearsal, "It may not be of any very solid value; but it is tremendous fun. I tell you, when those trills come our way, in the violins, they make us *feel like kings!*" Brahms's C minor symphony made us stare, though! I doubt if anything in all music ever sounded more positively terrific than that slow intro-

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duction to the first movement did to us then. Some twenty or thirty years before, Schumann's B-flat major variations had seemed about the *ne plus ultra* of "cats'-music;" but they were nothing to the Brahms C minor. Naturally the imperfect performance had much to do with the fearful impression the work made upon us at the time; but the novelty of the style was for a great deal in it, too. I think the only Boston musician who was really enthusiastic over the Brahms C minor from the beginning was B. J. Lang. But the rest of us followed him soon enough; I myself bringing up in the rear, after six years or so. It took considerably longer than that, though, for Brahms to win anything like a firm foothold in Boston. It was the old story over again. Schumann had to fight long for recognition from the public; Wagner did anything but come, see, and conquer. Liszt and Berlioz frightened almost all listeners at first. And, when Brahms came, he seemed the hardest nut to crack of all! Tchaikovsky took us by storm, when von Bülow first played his B-flat minor concerto here, and the *Andante* of

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his D major quartet soon became the "*Stella confidente* of quartet-players." But Tchaikovsky stock was not long in falling a goodish way below par; and it took it some time to rise again. If the Harvard Musical Association's concerts stuck pretty fast to the classics, they had at least an excuse in the coldness with which almost all the new things were received — no matter how loudly press and public might have clamoured for them. The public persistently cried for the new things, and turned up its nose when it got them.

ABOUT ART IN GENERAL

ABOUT ART IN GENERAL

Random Thoughts on Artists in General

AFTER Max Nordau, in that curious *Degeneration* of his, had done his best to show that many modern artists — poets, painters, composers, novelists, playwrights, etc., etc. — were degenerate and more or less insane, it was some comfort to hear his distinguished teacher, Cesare Lombroso, say, in his review of Nordau's book, that the author had erred in detecting signs of insanity merely in this or that noteworthy modern man of genius, and erred especially in implying that these signs of insanity were in any way to the discredit of the geniuses in question; for insanity was the invariable and inseparable accompaniment of genius of every sort, and always had been. This was some comfort, at least to those of us who deem modern Art and artists not wholly despicable, when compared to

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older Art and artists. For, if genius is always more or less insane, insanity can not justly be called distinctive of, nor in any way a reproach to, modern genius.

It is perhaps just this touch of insanity, or quasi-insanity, in artists that acts as the most impassable barrier between them and the rest of humankind. For note the curious fact: this quasi-insanity does not, as a rule, manifest itself in the artist's relation to his art so strongly as in his attitude toward life and society in general. We ordinary mortals can often understand the artist's relation to his art quite well; except in some few excessive cases, it strikes us as quite normal and explicable, — if anything, somewhat better poised and less ecstatic than we should have expected. But it is in his relations to every-day life that he seems less explicable, that we fail to understand him so sympathetically; it is here that his quasi-insanity manifests itself most perplexingly.

A noted artist, speaking one day of the pleasure he had had at a certain country-house,

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especially in the hostess's society, said: "There are women who know more or less about Art, and understand it tolerably well — not quite so well as they think they do, perhaps, but still pretty well; such women are, between you and me, holy terrors, as a rule! But there are other women who understand artists; and they are the ones I find charming." There is a good deal of meaning in the distinction here drawn; it is not merely imaginary. It surely does not take genius to understand genius, or its works, "tolerably well;" most of us, who have little or none of it, would kick, if any one were to impugn the intelligence and sincerity of our attitude toward the great works of genius in the world. But to understand the art-production is not quite the same thing as to understand the art-producer. It is not impossible that the women of whom my friend spoke, as "understanding artists," may have a streak of rudimentary, quasi-latent genius in their composition; not enough to enable them to produce, nor even reproduce, artistically, but enough to give them

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a sympathetic inkling of that touch of insanity which is inseparable from genius, an inkling which makes it possible for them to get something of an inside view of its various manifestations, and recognize their undercurrent of logic. Of course, I do not mean to confine this sympathy with artists to women; one finds it in not a few men, as well. It seems to bear no relation whatever to its possessor's understanding of Art; it is in no sense an understanding of Art itself, but an inborn intelligent sympathy with the artistic temperament.

Perhaps the commonest manifestation of quasi-insanity in artists is the view they take of themselves. One of the commonest forms of "degeneracy" Nordau points out is megalomania. Now, the artist's view of himself is, as a rule, absolutely geocentric in its egotism; it is this egotism which most veils the artist from the ordinary man, who, in many cases, can only see the egotism, but not the artist behind it. Likely enough, few artists will plead guilty to this charge of superabundant egotism; that is quite natural. It is, in the

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end, to be recognized as a normal trait of genius, as part and parcel of the quasi-insanity which genius implies; abnormal only when judged by ordinary standards, with the artistic temperament left out of consideration. And the artist, feeling it to be normal, from his point of view, is unable to appreciate that it exceeds the bounds of such egotism as is the common possession of all of us. With this excessive egotism go the nervous irritability, tetchiness, and at last jealousy which mark the artistic temperament.

—"Do you think Mr. —— can possibly feel hurt at this?" I once heard a certain committeeman ask, speaking of an artist who was not present. "Did you ever know of an opportunity for feeling hurt that any artist would let slip?" was the rejoinder.

No doubt, the very nature of an artist's employment, the enormous concentration his studies, practice, and productive work demand, the prominence of his position before the public, the wear and tear of protracted emotional activity upon the nervous system, are all

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calculated to foster this irritable tetchiness; no doubt, too, the artist's hard-earned experience of the infinite labour it takes to achieve prominence naturally tends to make him jealous of popular favour bestowed upon others, who seem to him to have won it more jauntily than he. All this may be argued, and much more. Whether the artist be a producer, or only a reproducer, — and artistic reproduction is in itself a sort of production, — his works are, in a sense, his children; and few of us can be brought to feel, in our heart of heart, that there is not something extraordinary about our own progeny. It takes a marvellous bad child to damp its parents' pride in it! But, though all these influences may be admirably apt to foster the artist's egotism, to develop his megalomania, it does not seem to me that they are sufficient to create it; at least the germs of this portentous egotism must be congenital, part and parcel of that quasi-insanity which — so Lombroso tells us — is inseparable from genius.

It is probably an insuperable lack of under-

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standing of, and sympathy with, this common manifestation of artistic insanity that renders a satisfactory indulgence in the society of artists so difficult to many of us. How many men and women are there not, whose love for Art leads them to seek the companionship of artists, but who find it impracticable to get upon terms of mutual freemasonry with them? Why? Because the average man tires, after a while, of companions whom he has constantly to handle with the most delicate of gloves, so as not to wound their susceptibilities. On the other hand, artists soon tire of him, because they dislike having their susceptibilities continually wounded. Moreover, the lack of common instinct will probably prevent the outside art-lover's mastering the problem of the artist's tetchiness. He sees artists handle one another, as it strikes him, without any gloves at all; why, then, should he have to put them on? — he, in whom nothing but the friendliest spirit is presumable, in whom professional jealousy is out of the question. The trouble is that he is trying to deal

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practically with a mental disease of the intricacies of which he is ignorant; he has to do with a temperament the extreme sensitiveness of which, in some directions, is all the less comprehensible to him, that he finds it unexpectedly callous in others — in which he, like enough, may be somewhat sensitive himself. He fails to grasp the subtile logic of the insanity of genius; he is in constant peril of giving the artist a thwack upon his sorest spot, and may often hesitate even to stroke him where he might have kicked him with impunity. The possibility of any freemasonry between him and artists is virtually null.

After all, the matter is as broad as it is long. If, as I have said, the average outsider fails to grasp the subtile logic of the insanity of genius, the artist often fails as signally to comprehend the simpler logic of the sanity of no-genius. The every-day man's relations to life and society may be as incomprehensible to him as his are to the other. It is the old question over again: which of the two is really the insane one? To the caged lunatic, the rest of

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the world is as insane as he is to those outside his bars; the question is practically settled by the majority — but who knows? The artist may think the art-layman's misappreciation of his sensitiveness inexplicable and even brutal; so incomprehensible, indeed, that he can not help looking for some ulterior motive in the other's quite unintentionally wounding his feelings. The suspiciousness of artists in this matter seems at times well-nigh preternatural; but it is merely a part of the insanity of genius.

I may have seemed to use the word *genius* somewhat too loosely here; for the sort of insanity of which I have spoken is unquestionably met with in many an artist to whom the world would unite in refusing so high an attribute as genius. Some artists seem, in truth, to have the insanity of genius, without the genius of their insanity. I am no specialist in this matter; but may hazard a guess. We all know, at least, that, as artists go, the gravity of their insanity is no measure of the calibre of their genius — nor *vice versa*. My guess

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is that the peculiar mental derangement which is one of the conditions of genius may often manifest itself quite conspicuously without any accompanying manifestation of genius itself. As the quantitative proportion of genius to insanity is different in different subjects, it seems quite possible that the genius itself may often be so nearly null as to be practically inappreciable, while there may still be enough of it to account for the insanity. The characteristic mental derangement may be plainly recognizable, even in cases where the genius itself eludes direct diagnosis.

A not uncommon manifestation of what I may call the egotism of genius is the well-known proneness of artists (apparently) to undervalue each other's work. Of generous appreciation of each other, artists unquestionably show a great deal at times; this must be conceded them. But they are habitually terrible flaw-pickers, too; when they praise a fellow-craftsman, it is generally with a reservation. No doubt, most of us praise in the same way. But the artist's reservation — which

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may, after all, be merely a mental one, more implied by his manner than directly expressed in words — nearly always gives one the impression that his fellow-craftsman has failed just where he himself would have done better. People are too ready to call this sheer jealousy; but it seems to me quite natural, no jealousy is needed to explain it. There is an ideal underlying all artistic performance, whether productive or reproductive; and the artist is more completely, more vividly conscious of his own ideals than he can be of the exact quality of his own performance. Of the quality of another's performance he is, however, an excellent judge; whereas he can know the other's ideals only through the character of this performance. So, when brought face to face with the performance of his fellow-craftsman, he — no doubt unconsciously — tends to compare it, not with his own actual or potential performance, but with his own ideals. It is not unnatural that the other's performance should suffer somewhat by the comparison.

That the over-keen sensitiveness, tetchiness,

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egotism, and jealousy of artists are quite normal manifestations of the insanity of genius seems to me evident enough. It seems to me equally evident that these faults are not justly to be judged by the common standard of ordinary men. With and in spite of all this superacute egotism and sensitiveness, this ever-watchful jealousy, see how well artists, upon the whole, get on together. One would think that men so constituted could be nothing but powder and match to one another, that their mutual intercourse would be a mere series of explosions. This is, however, far from being the fact; we outsiders are much more likely to be matches to the artist's powder than one artist is likely to be to another's. The only plausible explanation seems to be that artists, being all insane with the same insanity, well and sympathetically understand what I have called the subtile logic of that insanity; they feel instinctively that what would wound them will wound their colleague also — and act accordingly. And they know what will wound as we outsiders cannot.

We are hopelessly shut out from the freemasonry of genius, and can never quite comprehend the workings of its accompanying insanity.

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Happy Thought. — To quote carelessly "*Poluphoisboio Thalasses*," and say with enthusiasm, "Ah, *there's* an epithet! How grand and full is the Greek language!" — F. C. BURNAND, *More Happy Thoughts.*

Polyphloísboio thalásses

— "Hullo!" said Felix, "there's the big thing that's so much talked about."

Five rows of people were gazing at the big thing. — ÉMILE ZOLA, *Madame Neigeon.*

When the late lamented Jumbo was in New York he attracted so much attention that his colleagues, although but little inferior in size, had "no show" whatever. Everybody crowded around Jumbo, stuffing him with bushels of oranges and apples, while the other elephants were entirely ignored. . . . . In æsthetics, this Jumboism, this exaggerated desire for mammoth dimensions, seems to be a trait of the human mind which it is difficult to eradicate. — HENRY T. FINCK, *Chopin and Other Musical Essays.*

Polyphloísboio thalásses

PROBABLY few of us are quite safely cuirassed against the attack of magniloquence. Few of us can quite dissociate the idea of bigness from the idea of strength. We see too many instances of strength and size going together for that. Prize-fighters, for instance, are classed, not according to their muscle, but according to their weight and inches; though the blow of a feather-weight may at times be estimable at more foot-pounds than that of a heavy-weight, the former would probably find few backers against the latter. The small boy who thrashes a big boy is *de facto* a hero, his admiring friends being, as a rule, quite willing to overlook the very possible fact that he is really stronger than his bulkier victim. Current slang — that infallible index of popular thought — has done its best to substitute the word "big" for the word "great" in American English. Size will ever have its admirers. And, as it is with size, — and its usual concomitant, weight, — so is it also with the spiritual correlatives of size and weight: pompousness, grandiosity, magniloquence.

Polyphloísboio thalásses

To transport this so general admiration for the bulky, the ponderous, the grandiose into our mental attitude toward works of art is dangerous; dangerous, but all too common! Yet it seems to me that, in our day, this is not the only, nor perhaps the most serious, peril to which our practical æsthetics is exposed. A more subtile and insidious danger may come from a too thoughtless reaction against this æsthetic Jumboism; an over-reckless disgust with the vulgar cult of the Big may end in the preciosity of a wanton, self-conscious cult of the Little. A too lavish harping on the fact that bulk and strength are divorcible may at last lead us to forget that they are often united. It may also induce a morbid, undiscriminating distaste for bulk *per se;* even to the pitch of disgruntling us with strength itself — as a too common attribute of bulk. After getting ourselves into this mental posture, we may easily go a step farther, and, in our new-fledged admiration for the Little, forget that delicacy is oftener a concomitant of strength than of weakness, and acquire a

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sickly fondness for the weak, the anæmic, the impotent.

The big is often strong; nay, some things owe all their strength to their size, all their beauty and impressiveness. The Pyramids would be nothing on a reduced scale. Bulk is not necessarily vulgar, neither is magniloquence. Fustian is vulgar, if you will; but there is a magniloquence which is not fustian. And, if you come to vulgarity, is the most orotund fustian of the camp-meeting howler as intrinsically vulgar as the shrivelled, drawling would-be-elegance of the drawing-room snob? Of all æsthetic vulgarity, preciosity is the worst; it is a self-conscious vulgarity that is ashamed of its better self, vulgarity double-distilled. And, of all known or knowable forms of preciosity, the farthest past praying for is that which burns incense at the altar of weakness.

One of the least respectable forms of preciosity in art matters is, to my mind, the now prevalent fad for the sketch — in contradistinction to the finished picture. It is, in the last

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analysis, little else than a phase of the cult of weakness. Do not misunderstand me. There are sketches in the world, in which the artist's genius gives us a glimpse of loftier things than it reveals to us in his finished pictures; sketches which half-articulately stammer forth a sublimer message than has yet been couched in the completer utterance of well-rounded periods. In some sketches you seem to catch a glimpse of genius, nobly nude; whereas, in the finished picture, you but see genius clothed. But, upon the whole, why is this? Mainly because scarcely any painter has yet had the artistic strength to develop his puissant, semi-articulate sketch into a wholly articulate picture, without letting some of the initial potency of the sketch evaporate in the process. That is about all! In the superior strength of the sketch the painter's weakness stands confessed. His ideal aim is to give full utterance to what is in him; not merely to stammer it forth in a half-articulate way; his business is to reveal his ideal to you, not merely vaguely to shadow it forth. If he can

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succeed in fully revealing only a part of that of which he can give you a hasty glimpse, so much the weaker he. And, if our admiration for some great sketches above the pictures developed from them implies nothing worse than a willingness on our part to extenuate and condone the painter's weakness, the popular fad for the Sketch — with a capital S, — for the Sketch *per se*, turns this condonation to a veritable cult. Such a cult can thrive only at the expense of a general cheapening and deterioration of our art ideals.

I find a similar deplorable preciosity in the now common disposition to attribute an exaggerated value to the musical phrase. People are too fond of saying things like "A single phrase of So-and-so's is worth a whole symphony of So-and-so-else's." Mind you, I do not say that such an expression of opinion is necessarily false; I know of some musical phrases worth more than Peru and Golconda, and of a symphony or two, worth less than nothing at all. Verily there be phrases *and* phrases in Music; some, valuable of and by themselves alone, —

for their plastic beauty, their dignity and grandeur, their poignant truth of emotional expressiveness, — others, again, valuable for the potency and power of growth there is in them, valuable as seeds from which a whole mighty composition can be made to grow. But I can not help suspecting, in general, that expressions of opinion of the sort I have just quoted are really morbid; they imply to me that what might have been a healthy reaction against musical Jumboism has been allowed to run to peccant lengths, that the patient, though well enough cured of what Jumboism he may have suffered from, is now experiencing the toxic effect of the remedies he has too prodigally taken, and has fallen from Jumboism into preciosity. Or, maybe, frightened at the ravages he has seen Jumboism make in the æsthetic system of others, he has made an excessive use of prophylactics, resulting in a tendency to musical microlatry. Or again, his may simply be a case of congenitally weak musical digestion, such as is best treated with spoon-victual.

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Polyphloísboio thalásses

As for the intrinsic artistic value of extended compositions, — long symphonies, elaborately worked-out fugues, etc., — this is merely a question of the value of the thematic material, *plus* the question whether they have attained their great bulk by a process of natural, normal growth, or have been artificially inflated to monster-balloon size with sheer gas. It is all very fine to say that, in this simple song or that unpretentious prelude, only a page or half a page long, the composer has given you matter of the weightiest import, in a nut-shell. Possibly he has; but there are some things which absolutely will not go into a nut-shell, and things of infinite moment, too. St. Augustine saw that the sea would not go into a hole in the ground!

Æsthetic Jumboism is a direful disease; but, to my mind, not so bad as its antithesis, æsthetic microlatry. Jumboism is, in general, quite sincere, if sincere in a mistaken direction; but microlatry is terribly liable to exhibit symptoms of affectation and cant. Æsthetic microlatry and preciosity seldom go alone; you

find them oftenest associated together. And from all taint of preciosity good Lord deliver us! After all, Jumboism, with its cognate admiration for the magniloquent and "*polyphloísboio thalásses*" in general, is essentially a bourgeois trait; it belongs, for the most part, if not quite distinctively, to what Zola has called "*cette horrible classe bourgeoise qui ne peut rien faire simplement et qui s'endimanche, quand elle mange un melon* (that horrible bourgeois class, which can do nothing simply, and dons its Sunday best to eat a melon)." But preciosity belongs to the dandy, — of all mortals the least respectable.

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WE all have heard of the canons of Art; though exactly what they are is not so easy to discover. They would seem to be rather fragile things, for Art itself has progressed through the ages at the expense of an enormous breakage of them. You can track the march of an art through time by the shattered canons in its path, as you can that of a picnic party through the woods by the broken

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egg-shells. Yet every single one of these demolished canons was once held sacred, held to be a thing infrangible, good for a safe voyage through eternity. At the least crack in any one of them a terrific outcry was raised, summoning all hearts of oak to rally round the legitimist banner, for Art was in danger; just as we hear the dread news that the Country is in peril from our every-year's national Tungenagemot. But *Ars longa, canones breves;* Art still lives and mocks at danger, in spite of her broken canons.

Yet, may it not be said, on the other hand, that an art without canons, an absolutely lawless art, must be no art at all? Where there are no laws, one would think that only one of two things can exist: either autocracy or anarchy. To the autocratic pitch, to the point of unquestioning obedience to the dictates of a single, irresponsible ruler, no art has ever yet brought it; perhaps also, never quite to the anarchic pitch. One concludes, therefore, that Art can not but obey some laws, — often of the unformulated, unwritten sort, — and that

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to discover these laws, and formulate them distinctly would be a not undesirable performance. But this discovery has had its difficulties. Probably no single entire law of Art has ever yet been fully discovered, but only parts and portions of laws. The formulating these parts and portions, too, the reducing them to ostensible rules and canons, has been done, for the most part, with a wisdom that saw no farther than its own nose. Rules have been made to fit isolated cases, and then proclaimed as valid for all cases and all time — with the results we know. No man has yet had the penetration of insight, the scope of vision, to see enough of a law of Art to be able to express it in a rule fit to outlive the ages and be more perennial than bronze. One may even expect that such penetration and scope of vision will be refused to man, to the end of time.

Yet, amid this continual breaking of canons, — partial formulations of laws, pretending to completeness ; temporary makeshifts, claiming to be everlasting, — it is to be noted how many rules, as yet unbroken, gain weight and

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authority by insensibly establishing themselves as conventions. The half-conscious plebiscitum of artists decrees that the truth contained in them is worth recognizing; and, from being partial, perhaps tyrannical, expressions of laws, they become willingly accepted conventions, conformity to which soon grows to be a matter of habit. In this condition, they exert their most potent, also their most beneficent sway. Convention is not to be rashly undervalued; without it, we should all be in but ill case. Our very language is nothing more than a long-inherited convention; there must needs be something conventional in the expressive methods of Art, or people would not understand them.

There are no relations in life in which at least something has not to be taken for granted; and the art which can take a widely recognized convention for granted is in the safest condition. It is only when conventions cease to answer to the needs of the times, cease to be true expressions of the general feeling, that they become irksome, and the few advanced leaders cry for their abolition; only when the canon that

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has become conventional can no longer be believed in, and the place of belief is usurped by cant. But, abolish the worn-out convention as you will, it must be replaced by another, which other, too, will be based on a canon whose truth may be as largely alloyed with falsehood as the old one. Only, the truth it contains will be better adapted to the needs of the age; it will more exactly express the feeling of the artistic world at large, and correspond more adequately to its demands. But note this: as the power of pure faith wanes in the world, and the craving for investigation, reasoning, and the exercise of judgment waxes loud, the authority of the new canon will be but feeble, till it can embody itself in a new recognized convention. The condition of Art meanwhile — between the death of the old convention and the establishment and recognition of the new — will seem to the thoughtless very like one of anarchy. A simple canon, no matter how well formulated, can exert little sway nowadays over the doings of men; it must first prove its viability before the world

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will accept it. And, where there is no rule, it seems as if nothing but anarchy can be. Yet, to my mind, this supposed condition of anarchy does not really exist.

Remember that analogies are ever liable to limp a little; you can find hardly one that stands and walks squarely on both feet. When we speak of anarchy in Art, it is only by analogy with anarchy in the State. And I here use the word "anarchy" in its current sense, not only of a state of no recognized rule, but of a state of no-rule which, from being such, is intrinsically and admittedly hurtful to mankind. Its badness lies in its practical workings more than in any theoretical considerations. Anarchy in the State virtually means far more than there being no recognized laws, no recognized government, and every man ruling himself; this is what it means theoretically, but practically it means every man not only ruling himself, but trying to rule all his fellows into the bargain, and make the whole world walk his gait. But there is little of this in the so-called anarchic periods of

an art. The artist does, in any case, what he pleases: in times when convention holds sway, he does it conventionally; when convention is dead, he does it unconventionally, but suits himself all the same. His innovations hurt no one, and there is little recalcitration, save from the critics; and, whew! who cares a rap for them? Possibly the "passionate press-agent;" and his regard for them is of a somewhat mixed quality. Here the theoretical and practical sides of anarchy coincide; but so innocuous a state of anarchy as that is hardly worthy the name! *Canons*

The important gist of the matter is, after all, this: the new canon — whether before or after its embodying itself in a recognized convention — will in all probability be no more complete, universal, nor lasting an expression of a law of Art than the old one it has displaced; it will probably be quite as partial and temporary. More than this, the old convention, which had ceased to be adequate to the needs of the times, was probably not inadequate all over and all through; it had be-

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come irksome in some ways, enough so to make men clamour for its abolition; but, in abolishing it, at least something good and viable was lost, something the loss of which the world can not endure forever. It is likely, too, that this lost something will not be contained in the new convention; so that this one also will have to be abolished in time, that the loss may be made good. In its progress, Art is ever thus dropping stitches, which it will in time have to go back and take up again. No convention, no matter how superannuated and effete, no matter how unfit for the world's complete adherence, is wholly and irredeemably bad; if it were so, it could never have been good; for, change as he may, the human animal remains always the same at bottom. It is by — perhaps unavoidably — abolishing the good with the bad in an effete convention that we prevent the new, fresh convention being altogether excellent. It is only more adequate to our present needs than the old one; that is all we can truly say in its favour, and that is enough. It furnishes the most convenient

channel for the art-workers of the day to let their inspiration flow through, affords them the fittest form in which to embody it. So soon as they begin to feel that, in losing something in the old convention, they have lost something of intrinsic, permanent value, they will not be slow in going back to take up the dropped stitch again. You may trust them for that. *Canons*

No doubt, the great art-workers, who are really the principal abolishers and promulgators of conventions in Art, do not always act with impeccable prudence nor the longest foresight. But Art is a field where feeling and enthusiasm — and their almost inevitable concomitant, sharpness of temper — have more to say than reason and circumspection. The original artist is so overjoyed to be rid of the harassing old, and be on with the welcome new, that he wishes the old good riddance forever and aye without compunction. Perhaps also it is true that, in Art, no man can acquire sufficient force of energy to rise to the pitch of kicking out the old, and embracing the new, unless he have

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a somewhat exaggerated, morbid, undiscriminating yearning for the one and hatred of the other. Something of the insanity of a fixed idea may be needful for the purpose. Few men advocate a revolution against what they deem merely inconvenient; man gets to the pitch of revolt only against what he has found intolerable. So the art-worker abolishes, not what he finds merely useless, but what he can no longer by any means endure. Then, to be sure, he abolishes it, root and branch; probably to be followed by another who will in time lovingly examine the old ploughed-up roots, to see if there be no green shoots sprouting from them; in which examination he is more than likely to be successful.

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WE have all heard of the pursuit of happiness, and know what the upshot thereof is proverbially likely to be. Poets have sung its hopelessness, painters and composers have celebrated the same on canvas and in tones, philosophers have proclaimed it in discouraging prose. Not that happiness is unattainable in

this world, but that the surest way not to find it is to seek it. The very hotness of your pursuit but adds swiftness of stroke to the fair phantom's wings.

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Much the same may be said of that not easily definable thing which is called culture. Knowledge you can seek and get; by due pertinacity of effort you may make yourself learned at will. But culture is more elusive; you may ransack the learning of the ages without ever acquiring it.

Perhaps artistic culture is really no more elusive than other sorts; but, in our country and to our race, it sometimes seems so. This does not prevent our striving after it with sturdiest zeal; we give ourselves no end of trouble to attain it — with what results, others had best decide. Still, as some of our efforts in this pursuit of culture are unquestionably failures, it may not be quite futile to try and speculate, why.

A too common error is to confound knowledge with culture. Not long ago, I heard an instructor in English literature at one of our

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larger universities complain bitterly of the apparent hopelessness of his task. "It is frightful," said he, "to look at all those eager, thoughtful faces; to think that those earnest people have come to me to be initiated into the mysteries of English style, and to see with what well-meaning obstinacy they do their best to render themselves impervious to teaching! One and all seem possessed with the idea that I am going to give them a formula, a recipe." One can see that his pupils had come for knowledge, that to them a formula, or recipe, represented knowledge in its most condensed and portable form. What they asked for was information that could be pigeon-holed in their minds, and taken out for use when occasion required.

But it is as true of Art — of which Literature is but one special department — as it was in the Garden of Eden, that "the tree of knowledge is not that of life." Only a Mephistopheles could write in an art-student's album: "*Eritis sicut artifex, scientes bonum et malum.*" No doubt, knowledge is a pre-

paration for culture, probably an indispensable one; for it is hardly conceivable that culture and ignorance should go hand in hand. But knowledge is not culture, for all that. *Culture*

Do any of my readers remember the learned quotation from Huxley, displayed in job-type by a certain restaurant in Boston, some twenty years ago? I forget the exact words, but the gist of it was that, when a man eats mutton, a process goes on inside him by which that mutton is transmuted into man; it becomes no longer mutton, but the man's own blood, flesh, and bone. This process is digestion and assimilation.

There is a mental correlative of this process of digestion and assimilation, by which knowledge is not merely stored in the mind, but so absorbed into its very fibre that it is transmuted into feeling and instinct. And, as the constitution of a man's bone, flesh, and blood is inevitably influenced by the kind of food he eats, — although it remains, in every case, his own blood, flesh, and bone, — so is the character of his mental fibre and constitution

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directly conditioned by the knowledge he has digested and assimilated. But note this: his mental fibre remains unchanged until his knowledge has been so digested and assimilated. He may store away knowledge without end in his mind, and still remain the same man that he was in the beginning; it is only after what I have called the process of mental digestion and assimilation, after the transmutation of knowledge into feeling and instinct, that his acquired knowledge begins to affect his very self and change his mental fibre. It is just this thoroughly digested, assimilated, and transmuted knowledge that we properly call culture. Culture is, in the end, a matter of feeling and trained instinct; never purely a matter of thought. It is a matter of perception.

What my friend of the university meant by his hapless pupils "doing their best to render themselves impervious to teaching" is probably this: their eager craving for a formula, or recipe, was nothing more nor less than a hunger for knowledge in the most condensed and portable, but also unfortunately in the least

digestible, shape possible. Pin your faith to an art-formula, and you forthwith destroy your immediate artistic receptivity. Never is a man so blind to the true quality and character of a work of art as when he allows an intellectual conviction to stand between himself and it. He views it, at best, through coloured spectacles; and, to his eyes, it assumes their colour, the only colour to which those spectacles are not opaque. *Culture*

I would not dispute the possible usefulness of art-formulas; for unquestionably they have their use. My aim is rather to determine, as far as I can, just what their usefulness is. And I attempt this with all the more zeal that the matter seems to me to have been often looked upon, especially of late years, in a totally false light. Zola has well said that a formula is but an instrument, from which the predestined man can draw most eloquent music. Absolutely true! But it is of use only to the creative artist; it is of no use whatever to those to whom he appeals through his creative work. An art-formula is but a condensed

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intellectual and rational expression of the creative artist's instinctive point of view, of his mental and emotional attitude toward his particular art. It is of use to him in so far as it enables him to become fully conscious of what his instincts are, enables him rationally to account for them to himself. If his formula is more, or less, than such an intellectual and rational expression of his instincts, if it is only an expression of an intellectual conviction of his, it is of no earthly artistic use even to him. For, if a purely intellectual conviction is blinding, when it stands between the ordinary man and a work of art, it is doubly and trebly so, when it obtrudes itself between the creative artist and his own work.

I have said that an art-formula, or recipe, represents knowledge in its least digestible shape; that is, it represents knowledge in the shape in which it is least transmutable into feeling and instinct. Remember that such a formula presents its instinctive and emotional side only to the creative artist who has found himself irresistibly impelled to formulate and

adopt it; to the rest of the world it presents only its purely intellectual and rational obverse. It is apprehended only through the intellect and reason, and can strike no deeper into the mind than these go. It is, in the last analysis, but an item of knowledge that must remain forever nothing more than knowledge; it is insoluble by that process of mental digestion and assimilation by which knowledge is transmuted into feeling and instinct, and can accordingly never become a factor of true artistic culture. The mind that is stored with insoluble art-formulas may strive after culture till dissolution comes, but will never attain it; for these indigestible and unassimilable items of knowledge only clog and paralyze the activity of the one thing absolutely indispensable to culture: the activity of instinct.

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Upon the whole, it is a matter for some wonder, what terribly faulty and incomplete things art-formulas are, as the world goes. There never was one that did not have its more or less patent Achilles heel. Take, for instance, the Wagnerian formula; it is cock or

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the walk to-day, but is it really any more irrefragable than the Donizettian? Is it any less conventional, in the last analysis? Why, it is based on a pure convention: that the characters in a drama shall sing, instead of speaking. I do not say that this convention is bad or indefensible, — few conventions are; — but it is a convention, and nothing but a convention, for all that. Wagnerians laugh at Donizetti for making his *dramatis personæ* express quite different, sometimes diametrically opposite, sentiments by singing the same melody over to different words. Absurd! you say? But why, absurd? He who takes upon himself to deny that totally different emotions can be expressed through one and the same melody must have read the whole history and philosophy of Music upside down. It is dramatically absurd, is it? for poor insane Lucia to sing what she does in that mad-scene of hers? Ah! my most excellent Wagnerian friend, come, lay your hand upon your heart and tell me, is she not — and precisely from your own point of view — doing just the craziest thing imaginable?

It seems to me that they who criticise the Wagnerian or the Donizettian formula are, in reality, criticising something which has nothing whatever to do with an accurate perception of the artistic character and quality of Wagner's music-dramas or Donizetti's operas. Neither is good nor bad *because of* its formula; and, until you forget that formula, you will be unable clearly to perceive the quality of either. *Culture*

I much fear that what sorely troubles most of us Anglo-Saxons, in our relations to the fine arts, is that precious tendency of ours to take everything by its ethical side first. A most useful mental habit for preserving the sturdiness of character of a race; but, like many another useful thing, productive of considerable damage, when misapplied. I do not mean here that proclivity, which comes to the surface from time to time, to look first to discover whether there be anything dangerous to popular morals in this or that particular work of art; for many of us have got well over that form of ethical itch. What I especially mean

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is the enormous value we incline to attribute to anything in the shape of a conviction. No one need doubt that a rational, firmly held conviction is of incalculable value in many contingencies of life; but, in so thoroughly unmoral — which is not the same as immoral — a matter as Art, it has, upon the whole, very little to say. This inordinate valuation of a conviction too often holds us down to what I will call mere art-learning, and prevents our rising to the point of true artistic culture.

If the art-formula may be called a condensed expression of knowledge in its least digestible and assimilable shape, a so-called artistic conviction is the first result of attempting to digest it. And trying to digest the indigestible is a proceeding not conducive to health. Artistic culture can not be attained in this way. Perhaps the worst of convictions is that they are terribly liable to become prejudices. The true aim of artistic culture is to train the instincts, not to eradicate them; to heighten their activity, not to block it. If the accumulation of stored-up knowledge tends to make

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a man heavy-headed and emotionally logy, the thorough mental assimilation of that knowledge, and its complete transmutation into feeling and instinct, give him a nimbleness, an immediateness of perceptive faculty, in comparison with which that of the child is but rudimentary; and this is what is meant by true culture. By the force of culture man *se refait une — naïveté!* But this culture of which I speak must be the genuine article, not that worst of pseudo-anythings which is quite properly mis-spelled "cultchaw." For that, instead of being assimilated knowledge, is, for the most part, sheer undigested ignorance.

The Square Root of Minus One

THERE is more poetry in pure Mathematics than some persons give it credit for. The very fact that it deals with the abstract, the intangible, the imponderable, at times even with the metaphysically non-extant, with the inconceivable, is of itself not devoid of poetic suggestiveness. We find in it expressions of abstract truth, often wondrously symbolical of truths in our own experience.

The Square Root of Minus One

What, for instance, can be more essentially poetic than the asymptote — that straight line which runs out to infinity along side of the hyperbola, the line to which the curve draws ever nearer and nearer, without ever reaching it? Is not this a symbol of the human soul, striving, but in vain, after its ideal? Take, again, the "imaginary quantity;" what can be more alluring to thought, more stimulating to the imagination? It is inconceivable, unimaginable; yet capable of being quite definitely expressed, even of being handled and juggled with as easily as if it were really something. Its fascination is its elusiveness. It, as it were, roguishly offers you its tail; then, when you come with your pinch of salt, whisks it away, and your salt falls upon vacancy.

The square (second power) of a positive quantity is positive; that of a negative quantity, positive likewise. The square of $+2$ (that is, the product of 2 multiplied by 2) is $+4$; the square of -2 is also $+4$. Therefore the square root of $+4$ is either $+2$ or -2. In general, the square root of a positive quantity is either

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positive or negative. But the square root of a negative quantity? What, for instance, is the square root of -4? It can neither be positive nor negative; that stands to reason. Then, what can it be? What is it? Echo answers, what? Mathematics answers, imaginary.

The common mathematical expression of the imaginary quantity, in general, is "the square root of -1." Whatever mathematical product, combination, series of positive and negative quantities you may have, if this imaginary quantity enters but once as a factor, your whole product, combination, or series becomes imaginary. In the higher Mathematics, all combinations or series of positive and negative quantities are called "real;" but, once introduce the square root of minus one as a factor, and the whole series or combination becomes "ideal." Every real series has its exactly corresponding ideal series. As Professor Benjamin Peirce used to say, every mathematical expression of a truth in the real world is haunted, as by its own shadow, by the expression of a corresponding truth in the ideal world.

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If this is not poetic to the core, I know not what is. Just see where Poetry will at times build her nest; even on the heights of pure Mathematics!

Professor Peirce's dictum is true in a wider field than that of Mathematics, wide as that is; it may be so generalized as to include all truth, not merely the mathematical expression of a truth. Every truth in the real world has its exact counterpart in a truth in the ideal world.

Especially is this true in the domain of Art. We talk about the Real and the Ideal in Art; too often forgetting how intimately the two are related. Too many of us have somehow got it fixed in our minds that only the real is true; that the ideal is but a distortion thereof, and must necessarily contain an element of falsehood. We look upon the ideal in Art as a sort of beautiful white lie, whose mission it is to console us for the shortcomings of the real. Beautiful white lie? No lie, of whatsoever colour, is beautiful. Mendacious art is to be distrusted; all the more, if it lie

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"ideally." This false conception of the ideal has been the parent of more bad art than all the realists and naturalists have ever been guilty of; their foulest delving in ditches and gutters, their most morbid revelling in the seamy side of life, are pure snow, compared with the nightmare imaginings of false idealists.

The true ideal in Art is not a distortion of the real; idealism is not the negation of realism. On the contrary, the ideal must be based on the real, and be true as it. The ideal is an expression of the real, affected by the square root of minus one, by that faculty of the human mind which is called Imagination. It was surely not for nothing that this square root of minus one was called the imaginary quantity; it is a true symbol of the artist's imaginative faculty; it transmutes real truth into ideal truth.

The proper function of the imagination in Art is to discover, or invent, means of making the essence of reality, nature, and truth more plainly cognizable and keenly felt; not to console the cowardly in spirit by showing them

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fantastic shadow-pictures of what can never be.

Of such means, one — though perhaps not the most potent — is Symbolism. Not a little has been said, first and last, against symbolism in Art; yet I can see no harm in it, so long as it is clearly recognizable as such, so long as the symbol runs no risk of being mistaken for anything but a symbol. Hard-and-fast realists complain of the wings the old masters painted on angels' shoulders — which is not particularly sensible of them, by the way, for what do realists know about angels, in any case? But let us waive that. I think I remember a child's book, of the *Sandford and Merton* sort, in one of the stories in which a would-be-instructive old gentleman strove to impress upon his pupils' minds that winged angels would be hideous in the anatomist's eye; I fancy something followed about the insufficiency of the pectoral muscles. One wishes at times that a law could be passed, forbidding the writing of children's books by people devoid of a sense of humour. What,

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in heaven's name, has an anatomist to do with angels? Still, the point may be worth considering.

No one need be told that the angels' wings in pictures by the old masters are purely and simply symbolical, not fantastic attempts at improving upon human anatomy. In most cases, too, they are quite recognizably symbolical: merely conventional, not scientifico-ornithological wings. They ought not to trouble the anatomist, for there is nothing in them to appeal to the anatomist, one way or the other. They are not in his line.

But I once saw a modern painting of a Cupid, on whose shoulders were quite realistic white dove's wings. That Cupid made your flesh creep! The wings were so exactly and elaborately true to nature — that is, to pigeon nature — that you felt at once that they could not possibly grow out of the boy's shoulders; their evidently being the amputated wings of some dead pigeon, artificially stuck there, gave them an air of grewsomeness that forbade all impression of beauty. Their symbolism was

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lost. It would have been only a shade worse, if the painter had gone a step farther and tried to correct the patent insufficiency of those horrible wings, as organs of flight, by giving his Cupid pectoral muscles capable of flapping them effectually, — I believe, a yard thick has been calculated as about the requisite size, — so that not even the dullest-eyed could mistake the boy for anything but a monstrosity.

But, if symbolism in Art is innocent, so long as it is unmistakable as such, what shall be said of other products of the so-called "pure imagination," — by which term is generally meant, the imagination which cuts itself loose from reality, — in which no symbolical meaning is discoverable? How about Goethe's Erlking and Shakspere's Ariel? Such creatures never existed, neither could they ever exist; yet are they any the less truly poetic, and in the best sense?

If we look closely, we shall see that such creatures of the so-called pure imagination are, strictly speaking, never an outcome of the poet's unaided fancy. As Heine says,

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Der Stoff, das Material des Gedichts,
Das saugt sich nicht aus dem Finger;
Kein Gott erschafft die Welt aus Nichts,
So wenig, wie irdische Singer.[1]

The Supernatural in Art is but an after-reflection of what was once deemed real; its basis is the anthropomorphitic tendency of Man, during the childhood of the race, to embody all natural forces, the hidden causes of all natural phenomena, in human shapes, and account for them so — in default of a better explanation. This poetic anthropomorphism was the forerunner of scientific investigation. Its products were firmly believed in as truth; they could thus form an all-sufficient basis for the artist's imaginative presentation. The existence of fairies, demons, gnomes, and hobgoblins was so vivid to the mind of Man in past ages, that its vividness has been able to withstand the wear and tear of centuries. Shakspere did not create his Ariel out of nothing; he found the stuff for

[1] The stuff, the material, of the poem is not to be sucked from your finger; no god creates the world out of nothing, any more than earthly singers.

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him ready-made in popular belief, probably, too, in his own belief.

There is no false idealism in Ariel nor the Erlking; they are not inartistic white lies, for they present themselves quite frankly as supernatural beings. To be sure, their idealism is of a peculiar sort; it is not quite an expression of reality, affected by the square root of minus one, but an expression of what was once supposed to be reality, affected by the same imaginary quantity. It reposes on a supposition, say, like that of the fourth dimension in Quaternions; but this is quite legitimate artistically. And just here I am reminded that this mathematical simile holds most singularly good; for it is in the Quaternion Calculus that, as I have been credibly given to understand, the imaginary square root of minus one can be expressed with such definiteness that it ceases to be inconceivable, and acquires all the semblance of reality. In a similar way, when once you have presupposed the supernatural in Art, creatures like Ariel and the Erlking acquire a reality in their idealism that enables you to

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recognize them as beings with whom you are personally acquainted.

In sharp contrast with these sprites, see Gilliat, in Victor Hugo's *Travailleurs de la mer*, as he watches the departing vessel from his seat on the rock, until the rising tide covers his eyes, and he can see no more. Gilliat presents himself to you purely and simply as a man; he makes no claim to being supernatural. So you feel the scene which Victor Hugo describes with all his grandiose vividness to be merely false and fantastic. Gilliat would have been swept bodily away before the rising water had reached his eyes; even if he had been firmly chained down to his rock, he would have been drowned before his eyes were submerged. In either case, the thing is physically impossible. Here we have a piece of utterly false idealism, wantonly distorting reality, for the sake of a sham emotional effect; Victor Hugo's imagination seems to have been powerless to show forth the tragic pathos of the situation in a natural way, and he saw nothing for it but to cut loose from reality and take a

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desperate header into the untrue. The ideal falsehood he shows us corresponds to no real truth.

The Complex

I ONCE happened to be present when two friends — one of them, a musician, the other, a merely general music-lover, but both of them, passionate devotees of the pleasures of the table — were amusing themselves with drawing up a compilcated *menu*. Another friend, a distinguished musician — whose tastes in the matters of eating and drinking were, however, of primordial simplicity — soon came up, and began to look with a half-amused, half-contemptuous smile at the elaborate bill of fare, which was fast approaching completion. "When it comes to eating," he said at last, "you two fellows seem bent upon nothing so much as making the most adventurous, complicated, and unnatural combinations!" To which one of the two epicures — the musical one — replied: "Now, do you know? you are the very last man who ought to make a remark like that. Don't you see that that is just

the way the most hopeless amateur talks about a fugue?"

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Yes, that is the way a good many people talk — or think — about a fugue, a symphony, or, in general, any of the higher and more complex developments in Music. The cry for "noble, perspicuous simplicity" in Art is old as the hills. Prince de Valori, for instance, says of Rossini's *Messe solennelle:* "One needs a little technical knowledge, but, above all things, heart and poetry, to understand it. One does not need, as for Beethoven's *Mass in D*, to have rowed twenty years in the galleys of counterpoint, to try to decipher it." There you have it: "heart and poetry" on one side; and, on the other, the "galleys of counterpoint." Counterpoint, which is in general nothing, if not complex, reduced to a condition of mere shameful penal servitude! It is the old story: sweet simplicity going straight to the heart, complexity, to the brain — and, what is more, stopping short there!

Some of us are getting rather over-tired of this old story; we find it not only threadbare,

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but radically false. Is the possession of a brain, or the delight in using the same, a sign of lack of heart? Moreover, are the workings of the heart — that is, of what its votaries call the heart, not the blood-pumping organ — any less complex than those of the brain? Are the affections, emotions, passions more easily decipherable, less intricate in their complexity, than thought and reason? Is what aims at reaching the heart less likely to get there for having to pass through the brain on its way? To each and all of these questions, a thousand times, No!

Art is organic; and the more complex organism is, generally speaking, the higher. If organic complexity were a bar to poignancy of appeal to the emotions, the earth-worm would be a more moving spectacle than a beautiful woman. The most thrilling love-story would be, at first sight, "Madam, will you have me?" — "Yes, kind Sir, I will!" and so, an end of it.

When people cry aloud for "simplicity," what they really mean — or ought to mean —

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is unity of impression. But the most complex art-forms, when treated with genius, can produce as perfect unity of impression as the simplest. No doubt, there are complexities in Art which some people are impotent to unravel. But then, what of that? Schopenhauer says that, when a head and a book carom together, and you hear a hollow sound, it is not always the book's fault. If you lose your bearings in a complex work of art, this is not necessarily to the discredit of the latter — it is just possible that the fault may be yours.

"The chief end of Art is to move the emotions," crieth the emotionalist. Possibly it may be; but *whose* emotions, my good friend? Is Art to stop at the all-but-feeble-minded, and have nothing to say to the thinker? And shall all be done for him to whom thinking — heaven save the mark! — comes hard, who can not feel while trying to think, and nothing for him who feels most strongly when he has something to think of? There be some to whom mental vacuity is as

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abnormal and irksome a condition as hard thinking is to others. If Art gives them nothing to think about, they will think of something else.

In complex forms of art, the true desideratum is that the complexity shall be really organic; more than this, that the artist shall so be master of his complex utterance that he can say more by its means than by any other. If the artist find himself caught and floundering in the toils he has spread to catch you, so much the worse for him; the less artist he! But if the complexity of his work is truly organic, if he is thoroughly master of his expression, then, if what he has to say is emotional in its very essence, never fear that he will lack responsive listeners — and they will be no fools, either. Neither will they be men of no "heart."

Upon the whole, the question of complexity or simplicity is not quite the same in all the fine arts. In the visual arts, whose manifestations occupy space, — Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, — it has somewhat different

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æsthetic bearings from in Music, Poetry, or the Drama. There is nothing in Painting, Sculpture, nor Architecture that corresponds to musical development and working-out, or to the gradual spinning and unravelling of a plot in the Drama or Poetry. What complexity of composition there may be in a painting, statue, or architectural design is all there at once; it meets the eye at the same moment, and the various component parts of the design have to be grasped, as it were, at a glance. If the first impression is confused and disorderly, this is in so far damning that it is unlikely to be cured by further study. To be sure, long study of a complicated pictorial composition may enable us better to understand the artist's treatment of his subject, better to comprehend the story he has tried to tell us in form and colour; but it will hardly render the purely pictorial effect less confused than it was at first. And this pictorial effect is the real artistic gist of the picture.

In Music, on the other hand, great complexity of plan — unless it involve the simul-

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taneous presentation of two or more themes — and the most elaborate development and working-out do not necessitate the ear's grasping any but comparatively simple relations at any given moment of time. The same is true of Poetry and the Drama: the most involved plot in the world may be unfolded in the simplest language, and with the most patent perspicuousness of incident. What complexity there is is, for the most part, cumulative, the intricate working-up of essentially simple primary material. To grasp all its manifold relations requires no effort of immediate *coup d'œil*, as in the visual arts, but largely an effort of memory; which latter becomes less and less taxing with repeated hearings of the composition or poem, and at last vanishes altogether. The careful study of a piece of music, a drama, or poem, distinctly tends to cure what may have been confusedness of impression at first; but, as I have said, the careful study of a picture, statue, or building has, upon the whole, little power of doing this.

Take, for instance, Mr. Sargent's frescoes

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in the new Public Library. Protracted study of them can indubitably do much to help us understand his conception, discover just what his figures are doing, and detect their relation to the poetic or historic idea which he took as his point of departure; but it can not reduce the exceedingly complicated, and to some of us confused, pictorial impression to simplicity. If confusedness of impression was there in the beginning, it will — humanly speaking — survive all study and remain there to the end. Not all the study in the world can give additional emphasis to a single outline, nor change a single value. But you can not say this with truth of a Bach fugue, a Brahms symphony, a poem by Browning, nor a drama of Sardou's. In your relations to these, increasing familiarity distinctly does bring with it increased clearness of mental vision, an ever-lessening effort of comprehension.

Remember that, in our relations to each and every art, it is not intellectual activity that is any bar to a successful appeal to our emotional nature, but intellectual *effort*. It is the con-

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scious effort to understand that slackens the pulse, not the mere fact of our understanding no matter how complex a development. No complexity need trouble us a whit, after we have succeeded in unravelling it, in grasping the underlying idea, in responding to the implied or expressed emotion.

The Ludicrous

BY the Ludicrous I do not mean merely the Comic, the Laughable in general, but the unintentionally incongruous, the sort of thing that makes you laugh at the author, or artist, rather than with him.

The Ludicrous, in this sense, has often been excused on the ground of its being part and parcel of a necessary convention, a convention, without which, this or that particular form of Art must fall to the ground. The Drama, especially the Opera, has been full of conventions of this sort at certain periods of its history. Now and then it enters into somebody's head to see the ludicrousness of such a convention; he points it out to the world at large, and the world laughs at it

with him, as if it had never accepted it as a matter of course.

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Such a convention was the usual text of opening choruses in operas and vaudevilles, which generally began with the copula in the first person plural. For years and years no one saw anything incongruous in this; but nowadays — in France, at least — the old, time-honoured "*Nous sommes des bergères* (We are shepherdesses)" has passed into a byword for no longer admissible nonsense.[1] Yet this frank description of itself by the chorus is, in the end, no more essentially ludicrous than any soliloquy on the stage — especially a soliloquy overheard by another party.

A shot of another sort, not sheltered by any convention, but evidently made with artless unconsciousness, is to be found in one of the

[1] Apropos of this, it seems a singular stroke of irony that Wagner's earliest sketch for the music of his *Nibelungen*, yet discovered, should be the theme of the Ride of the Valkyrior, written out on a single staff, over words beginning: "*Wir sind Walküren* (We are Valkyrior)."

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old Porte-Saint-Martin dramas, where one of the characters begins a speech with "*Nous autres routiers du moyen âge* (We roadsters of the Middle Ages)." It reminds one of the famous coin, dated "A. C. 500."

Unlucky phonetic resemblances have brought more than one dramatist to grief; the top gallery is particularly sharp at catching on to things of this sort. In another of the old Porte-Saint-Martin plays of the 1830 period there is a scene in which the hapless author has put the following words into the mouth of his heroine, unjustly confined in a dungeon: "*Mon père à manger m'apporte* (My father brings me food)," which sounds so like "*Mon père a mangé ma porte* (My father has eaten my door)," that some one in the gallery straightway called out: "*Eh bien! alors, pourquoi donc que tu ne files pas?* (Well then! why don't you run away?)." What food for ridicule will not that terrible top gallery find out? Who of us can not remember the derisive titter inevitably excited by Lear's "Nor do I know where I did lodge last night?"

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A fertile source of the unwarrantably ludicrous in Literature and Poetry is clumsy translation. To be sure, translations seem, as a rule, less ludicrous to the people for whose benefit they are made than to those in whose native language the original is written. Still, one may fairly doubt, when Germans hear Othello call Desdemona "*eine ausgezeichnete Tonkünstlerin,*" whether it sounds quite the same in their ears as "an admirable musician" does in ours. Surely a Frenchman may be pardoned for not understanding, when the "dissolving view of red beads" on Mr. Podsnap's forehead is rendered by "*perspectif de petits boutons rouges et solubles;*" yet he will probably not see just where the ludicrousness comes in. In like manner, a German may be more amazed than moved to laughter, on finding Mr. Alfred Jingle's "Punch his head, — 'cod I would, — pig's whisper, — pieman too, — no gammon," turned into "*Der Punsch ist ihm in den Kopf gestiegen, — Stockfisch möcht' ich, — Schweinsrüssel, — auch Pastete dazu, — ohne Spinat!*" I have never been

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able quite to make up my mind whether to give the palm to this magnificent translation, or to that other imaginative flight of genius in the first American edition of the libretto to Verdi's *Trovatore*, in which the stage-direction after the Anvil Chorus, "*Tutti scendono alla rinfusa giù per la china: tratto tratto, e sempre a maggior distanza, odesi il loro canto*" is rendered: "All go down in disorder, and ever from a greater distance are heard singing to the Chinese tratto-tratto."[1]

Inadvertent ludicrous shots are sometimes made in the Drama by the author's unconsciously putting himself, or his *dramatis personæ*, to a certain extent into the position of the audience. Florestan's first words in the second act of *Fidelio* are a fair example. Poor Florestan has been over two years in his dungeon, when the curtain rises upon the second act of the opera; yet his first words are: "*Gott, welch ein Dunkel hier!* (God,

[1] I quote this from memory, and may have changed a word or two; but about the "Chinese tratto-tratto" I am sure.

what darkness is here !)." One would think he might have found that out before !

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In the representative arts, Painting and Sculpture, the ordinary observer finds perhaps less of the ludicrous, however much of it the expert may find. There is a set of drawings of scenes from Schiller by Kaulbach's pupils, known as the Schiller Gallery, in one of which the ingenuous artist has tried to depict a bridal party coming down the steps of a church. The bride — a particularly tall young woman — has her left foot on one step, and the toe of her right foot on the step below; this naturally puts her in a position in which her left knee is slightly bent, and her right leg, straight; yet, *mirabile dictu,* the artist has made her right hip higher than her left! There is an old Italian picture of the Nativity in which there is a wonderful semi-transparent donkey; the bricks of the wall behind him show through his body. Many a sculptor has calculated the enormous limp of the Apollo Belvedere, if he were only to take the next step; one of his legs measures a good deal longer than the other.

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Curiously enough, some of the wildest bits of ludicrous fantasticism in pictorial art are to be found in the illustrations of some old books of science. The Rev. J. G. Wood gives the following account of an old engraving of a rhinoceros, said to have been made by Albert Dürer from a drawing from life, sent from Lisbon — where, it appears, a live rhinoceros was in captivity at the time.

The engraving is nine inches and a quarter in length by six inches and a quarter in height, counting the length from nose to tail, and the height from shoulder to ground.

The horn is covered with tubercles pointing upward, and appears to consist of distinct plates. On the centre of the left shoulder is a short horn, twisted like that of the narwhal, and pointing forward. The body is covered with a kind of plate-armour, very like that which was worn at the period, especially for the fast-dying sport of tilting. A very large plate hangs over the back, something like a saddle, and is ornamented by eight protuberant ridges, which look as if a giant with very slender fingers had spread his eight-fingered hand as widely as possible, and left it on

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the creature's back. The shoulder-joint is defended by a plate that descends from the top of the shoulder, swells out at the junction of the leg with the body, and nearly reaches the knee. This plate plays on a rivet, which joins it to the large plate that guards the neck, and from which projects the little horn.

The hinder parts are covered by a huge plate of indescribable form, as it shoots out into angles, develops into sharp ridges, and sinks into deep furrows in every imaginable way. It bears a distant resemblance to the beaver or front of a helmet, which could be lifted or lowered at pleasure.

The legs are clothed in scale-armour, with a row of plates down the front of each, and a rivet is inserted in the centre of each plate. The abdomen and each side of the mouth is defended in the same manner. The throat is guarded by a series of five over-lapping plates, so as to allow the animal to move its head with freedom, while, at the same time, no part of the throat is left without defence. The feet are tolerably correct, and the artist has got the proper number of toes, each of which is very rightly enclosed in a small hoof. The whole outline is sufficiently good, and is drawn with a vigour that only

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increases our surprise at the exceeding untruthfulness of the details. [1]

Some persons have thought to find much of the Ludicrous in Music; but I must own that I personally can find very little of it. The Ludicrous is always based on the incongruous; and the relations between Music and the world we live in are so vague and ill defined that there seems little chance of any glaring incongruity slipping in. Take the Opera; when you have once gotten over its fundamental incongruity, that people shall sing, instead of speaking, it seems a little over-fastidious to stick at *what* they may take it into their heads to sing. No, I can find exceedingly little of the ludicrousness that comes from incongruity in Music. Musical jokes there may be — mostly of the technical sort; jokes which appeal to the sense of humour of musicians, much as Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz's joke on

[1] *Sketches and Anecdotes of Animal Life*, by the Rev. J. G. Wood, second series, page 124. Wood goes on to surmise that "the artist must have sketched the outline from life, and filled up the details at home."

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Mr. Pickwick — calling him a criminally slow coach, whose wheels would very soon be greased by the jury — appealed to the greengrocer, "whose sensitiveness on the subject was very probably occasioned by his having subjected a chaise-cart to the process in question on that identical morning."

Intentional wrong notes may at times sound funny in music; but surely unintentional wrong ones seldom do. One can hardly imagine a musical incongruity having the sublimely comic effect of the slip of the huge and magnificent Irishman, as the French Herald in *King John*. He was a most splendid person, but seldom entrusted with speaking parts; once, however, he was cast for the French Herald in *King John*, his part being cut down to the following two lines:

> You men of Angiers, open wide your gates,
> And let young Arthur, duke of Bretagne, in.

No one could have looked more majestic than he, nor filled the centre of the stage better, as he strode up before the city gates,

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truncheon in hand, and called out, in the richest Celtic brogue :

> Ye min of Angiers, op'n woide y'r geahts,
> An' lut young Airth'r, juke of Bretagne,
> *t'threwgh !*

Music can do much ; but she can not rise to the pitch of that "t'threwgh !"

GLEANINGS FROM THE COURT LIBRARY IN UTOPIA

GLEANINGS

FROM THE

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SHOW me the man who will admire a great work fully and heartily, without knowing the author's name, and I will call him a critic worth having. So speaks the ingenuous lover of truth. But it seems to me that the critic still better worth having is he who will heartily and fully admire a great work in spite of knowing the author's name. — JEAN GUILLEPIN, *Ce qu'on puise dans un puits.*

When Music, heavenly maid, was young, she was a very innocent little maid indeed; neither did her entertainment cost much. But she has well gotten over her pristine innocence now; and, though mortals are still found who

are willing to espouse her with but inconspicuous dowry, her keep costs a king's ransom. — FUNGOLFACTOR SCRIBLERUS, *De Musicæ natura.*

If one could only tell beforehand which of the mad-seeming talents of the day were destined to turn out great geniuses in the end, then would criticism be a bed of roses — to the critic! But how foretell? How pick out the particular ugly duckling that will grow up a swan? To do this, the critic must probably have a touch of madness, of the clairvoyant sort, himself. — JEAN ROGNOSSE, *Le critique impeccable.*

What can one say, after all, about instrumental and vocal music, save this? — that instrumental music is bound by nothing but the inherent laws of its own being; whereas vocal music ought, in decency, to take cognizance of the "laws," or whatever else you may call them, of something outside of itself. If it can, at a pinch, make foolish people believe that, by obeying these laws, it absolves itself

from all allegiance to its own, this is but a striking instance of popular credulity. — FUNGOLFACTOR SCRIBLERUS, *De Musicæ natura.*

The next world will surely afford us no more subjects for criticism than we find in this. If it offered us more, we should not find suicide — as a means of getting thither — so unattractive as we do now. — PLEUTHRO PAPYRUS, *Anarchiana.*

Is it a compliment, or something diametrically different, to the Art of Music to assert that her highest function is none other than that of the raw onion — to make human individuals cry? — GOTTFRIED SCHNEITZBÖRSTER, *Versuch eine physiologische Aesthetik zu begründen.*

In reading Wagner, one finds much about "*das Reinmenschliche;*" and it sometimes occurs to me that what Wagner calls the "purely human" may, in the end, be very like what Don Giovanni meant by his "*Sostegno gloria d'umanità!*" — IMMANUEL FLOHJÄGER, *Ueber Ethik und Kunstwesen.*

I always distrust a man who begins by apologizing for the fine arts, and gives plausible reasons why they should be allowed to exist. I suspect him of having an axe to grind. He has some mental reservation, and is blind to the great truth — which is none the less truth for seeming paradoxical — that it is, for the most part, in cases where an adequate apology is impossible that people feel themselves called upon to apologize. — KYON CHRONOGENES, *De stultitia.*

The natural expression of emotion, especially of grief or pain, is commonly accompanied by uncouth, inarticulate noises and a distortion of the features. When Music tries to express violent emotion, it is noticeable that her serene beauty often suffers a distortion which makes for ugliness. — FUNGOLFACTOR SCRIBLERUS, *De Musicæ natura.*

Take a man who feels Music strongly, and a man who knows Music not too deeply, and you have as fine a chance for a misunderstanding as the Father of Wrangling could wish

to see. — KYON CHRONOGENES, *De rebus vulgaribus.*

When will men of science learn that there is a *ne ultra crepidam* for them, as well as for cobblers? When will acousticians learn that, for them to prescribe what is good and serviceable for the Art of Music, and what, bad and detrimental, is on a par with a physiologist's telling Nature what to do, and what to avoid, in producing a horse? As Nature makes a horse, so does the composer of genius make music: according to laws which the acoustician may possibly hope to understand, but which all his science is impotent to alter by a hair's breadth. — GIROLAMO FINOCCHI, *La contadina scientifica.*

— "I'll tell you what I mean," said Guloston, laying aside his cigarette, to cut the tip off a big cigar, "just have the patience to listen, and I'll tell you what I mean by a symphonic dinner. It's no nonsense at all; the real old-fashioned French dinner, the *grand dîner* of the old school, was — Oh! that I

should have to say *was!* — in the sonata form."

— "How do you make that out?" asked Harmon, sipping his chartreuse. "I've heard of symphonies in white, or blue, or pink; but hang me if ever I heard of a sonata in food!"

— "Stop monkeying with your chartreuse before you've finished your coffee, like a brute beast that has no soul, and I'll tell you," Guloston responded; "a man who sandwiches chartreuse like that, — it's fifteen years old; see, the name is blown in the bottle, not etched on it, and the stuff deserves to be drunk with reverence, — I say, the man who sandwiches chartreuse like that between two sips of black coffee does n't deserve to know anything about the higher artistic side of dining. But never mind; I will prove to you that the regularly planned French dinner is in the sonata form — there can be no doubt about it."

— "Fire away," said the other, "I'm quite willing to be educated in the higher gastronomy."

—"Well, then! here it is," Guloston went on, lighting his cigar at one of the candles on the table, "here it is. In the first place, you must know that the French dinner of the old school, the good old school, was divided into two parts, two *services*, as the technical name is. The first began with the *Relevés* . . ."

—"I always thought the first began with the soup," put in Harmon, "or oysters."

—"Not a bit of it! There 's where you make a fatal, an unpardonable mistake!" cried Guloston, "an error that would knock my theory on beam ends! The first *service* begins with the *Relevés*, the *grosses pièces chaudes*; then come the *Entrées*. The second *service* begins with the *Rôts*, plain meat or game, with salad; these are followed by the *Entremets*, the vegetables and sweets. Now, both these two *services* must be in equilibrium, they must counterbalance each other exactly; there must be as many *rôts* in the second as there have been *relevés* in the first, as many *entremets* as *entrées*. You understand that?"

—"Yes, I see that," replied Harmon, "but I must say I 'm a bit curious about the soup."

—"Ah! my dear fellow," went on Guloston enthusiastically, "the soup and *hors d'œuvres* belong properly to neither *service*; the soup is nothing more nor less than a free introduction to the whole dinner. As you musical sharps say, the free introduction — in slow tempo — is not a real factor of the form at all; it is only a preparation for what is to follow. As for the *hors d'œuvres*, their very name shows that they are outside the circle of the form: they are nothing but free light skirmishing, and have no thematic importance. They follow the soup, — or, if you take them in the sense of the Italian *antepasti*, as we do our oysters in this country, they come before the soup, — and have no influence upon the form whatever. They should be eaten *frei-phantasierend*, just tasted, a bit here and a bit there; not dwelling upon any particular flavour, but skipping daintily from one to another, like eating harlequin-ice. *Hors*

d'œuvres, in the French sense, — that is, coming after the soup, — might be compared to a free, premonitory transition-passage leading over from the introduction to the main body of the movement. You understand so far, Harmon?"

— "Yes, I understand so far: the soup, with the *hors d'œuvres* or *antepasti*, is the free introduction. Now for the sonata form proper!"

— "Now for the sonata form proper; exactly!" said Guloston, blowing a ring from his cigar. "The *relevés* — of which there ought to be two, one of fish and one of meat — are the first and second themes. The *entrées* — of which there should be at least four, if there have been two *relevés* — represent the free fantasia, the working-out in detail of those two leading ideas of fish and meat."

— "Wonderful!" exclaimed Harmon, tossing the stump of his cigarette into the fire, and taking a sip of chartreuse unreproved, before rolling another. "Wonderful! But how about your working-out of the two

principal themes? I see the meat part of it clearly enough; but how about the fish part? The fish once done with, it does n't return again."

— "There's where you are totally and barbarically wrong," Guloston replied; "the idea that fish belongs exclusively to the beginning of the first *service* is that of the British barbarian and of his only slightly more civilized American descendant. There may be, and really should be, an *entrée* of fish, as well as of meat; remember such things as Thackeray lobster, or picked crabs; take little *bouchées* of oysters or clams, or *écrevisses bordelaise*. Any small dish with a sauce and garnish is an *entrée*, and consequently belongs in the second part of the first *service* — in the working-out. You must n't forget that the *relevés* are essentially *grosses pièces*, big dishes; they, too, have a sauce and garnish, but the little things of a similar kind are *entrées*. Well, with the *entrées* the first *service*, the first part and free fantasia, comes to an end."

— "Then comes the Roman-punch —

with perhaps a cigarette, I suppose," suggested Harmon. "Where do you make room for that in your sonata form?"

— "Aha! *y es-tu!*" cried Guloston, delighted. "A pupil who asks intelligent questions is a pupil worth having! Of course, we have Roman-punch, and equally of course, we have a cigarette with it. And, as you seem to suspect, it is no regular nor necessary part of the form; only a delightful adjunct. The Roman-punch and cigarette form a free poetic episode, not connected with any of the leading themes; you find such episodes now and then in symphonic first movements, though perhaps not so often as in dinners. But we can easily find an example. Let me see; yes, take the passage for the muted violins with the *tremolo* on the violas in the overture to *Euryanthe:* that is the Roman-punch with a cigarette. The parallel could not be more accurate!"

— "Good for you, my boy!" cried Harmon; "you keep your head and heels like a true master! Who would have thought of

such a parallel! Well, let's get on to our second *service*, to the third part of the movement — since the first *service* includes the first part and the working-out."

— "Ah! here you must follow me carefully," answered Guloston, "and for that you had better fill up your glass of chartreuse once more and pass me the bottle. Here the parallel becomes less exact, I admit; but it holds good, all the same, if you don't insist upon every *i* being dotted and every *t* crossed, like a mere Philistine pedant. Let us first consider the *rôts*, of which, as you will remember, there must be as many as there were *relevés* in the first *service*. These *rôts* represent the return of the principal themes in the third part of the movement. I admit that there is no fish in them; also that there is still another difference between them and their corresponding *relevés*: the *relevés* were dishes with sauce and a garnish — of mushrooms, truffles, or some other vegetables — and this same idea of sauce and *garniture*, of a more or less vegetable nature, was further carried

out in the *entrées;* whereas the *rôts* are plain roast meat or game, without sauce or garnish — unless you call the salad a garnish, and, if the salad is not of the vegetable kingdom, what on earth is it? But let that pass for a moment; we should never ride a simile, or parallel, between two different arts to death. If we do, we come to grief, and all the poetry of the thing is lost!

"Let us accept the two *rôts* as the second *service* representatives of the two *relevés* in the first; like the *relevés,* they are *pièces de résistance,* solid meat, no matter how delicate; they mean a return to business, just as the return of the first theme does at the beginning of the third part of a symphonic movement. They are followed by the *entremets* — vegetables and sweets — which are equal in number to the *entrées* of the first *service,* and so serve as a sort of ideal counterpoise to them. Now, what are these *entremets?* Evidently they are the coda, the second free fantasia, as Beethoven developed it in the *Eroica,* to counterbalance the first one. And note just

here how the difference in material between the two *services* — there being a want of perfectly exact correspondence between the *relevés* and the *rôts*, between the *entrées* and the *entremets*, — instead of destroying my parallel, makes it ideally stronger and more exact. What is, after all, the main and characteristic difference between the first and third parts of a symphonic movement? Principally a difference in tonality, in key. The first part quits the tonic after the first theme; the third part sticks to the tonic. Now, there is nothing to correspond to the idea of tonality in gastronomy; so our dinner has to mark the difference between its first and second *services* in some other way. And it does this by means that are purely its own, purely gastronomic. The coherent idea that runs through the first *service* is the presentation and working-out of two forms of esculent material — animal and vegetable food — *together*; for the sauces and garnishes are made up largely of vegetable ingredients. The idea of the second *service*, on the other hand, is the presentation

and working-out of the same, or similar, material — animal and vegetable food — *apart* and *separately;* the *rôts* being all animal, and the *entremets,* all vegetable. In Music, symphonic development proceeds from the simpler to the more complex; in Gastronomy, it proceeds from the complex to the simple — just the reverse, you see. This is the main difference, depending wholly upon the different media of the two arts. In each of the two, this progression has its own reason of being, based upon the nature of man's receptive power — through the ear in one case, through the gullet in the other. The ear is fatigued in a very different way from the palate; the . . ."

— "Stop! for heaven's sake, stop!" cried Harmon. "Let's stick to art, and stop short of metaphysico-physiology! I understand you perfectly; you are right as right can be. Your dinner in sonata form has entered into my comprehension, and I knock under with the best grace in the world. You've proved your point to the satisfaction of any one whose soul is large enough to take in the delights of

the table and the glories of Music! And damned be the musician who has no love for eating and drinking! But wait a bit; what do you do with the dessert in your symphonic scheme? It strikes me, now that I think of it, that the dessert would be the real coda of a dinner."

— "Hm!" said Guloston, looking thoughtfully at the stump of his cigar, "dessert — fruit, ices, cheese, nuts, and all that sort of thing — is something over and above, something *par dessus le marchê;* very desirable and even necessary, if you will, but still, like the soup and *hors d'œuvres,* lying outside the circle of the form. It has its symphonic equivalent, too, although, to find it, we may have to leave first movements of symphonies, and turn to the overture — which is, after all, in the same general form. You must know overtures enough that end with a perfectly free *apothêose,* as the French say; with a free ending that has no thematic connection with what has gone before, and merely serves to round off the whole with a brilliant or soothing fare-

well. Take the overture to *Egmont;* that ends in this way. I know that this sort of thing is technically called a free coda; but you must admit that it has nothing in common with the sort of coda Beethoven developed, that second free fantasia to which I have compared the *entremets.* If symphonic first movements seldom end with a "dessert," it is simply because they are first movements, and something more is still to come; that is why we find the "dessert-coda" more frequently in overtures — they are musically complete in themselves. Oh! the dessert presents no real difficulty; it lies outside the circle of the form.

"And now, if you don't want any more chartreuse, I'll beat you a game or two at three-ball caroms." — EDGAR MONTACUTE, *A Modern Proteus.*

Some people who bore you by laying down the law *ex cathedra* about Music have the additional impudence to preface their remarks with "Of course, I don't understand Music

scientifically!" In nine cases out of ten, they speak truer than they think for: they not only do not understand Music scientifically, they do not understand it at all. — FUNGOLFACTOR SCRIBLERUS, *De stultitia.*

"Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast," saith Congreve. Most true! But why? Because the savage is verily a savage; that is, a being whose predominant traits are indolence and thirst for blood; he is torn by two conflicting impulses, the one of which makes for laziness and inaction, the other, for universal devastation. Music solves his great life-problem. Music will do all the devastating business for him, the while he merely looks on in sybaritic *dolce far niente.* If any one doubt this, let him consider the ruin wrought in populous parts of great cities by mere civilized practice on the flute, and try to imagine to what excruciating perfection this nefarious art must be brought by savages! — HANS SCHWARTEMAG, *Die schönen Künste ethnologisch betrachtet.*

The world is, thank heaven! not quite full of those "absolute" knaves, with whom we must "speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us." But gentry of their sort are to be found in many highways and byways of life, and make it their business that every *i* shall have its dot, and every *t*, its cross. The little school-mistress who insisted that the girl was "called" Nancy, but "named" Ann, was a worthy soul; but her worth was not enhanced by rarity; she was no unique specimen. She was cousin-german to those uncomfortable people to whom accuracy is sweet, and suggestiveness, a siren of dubious respectability; the people who have missed their vocation if they pass through life without being called to the witness-stand.

Eminently respectable persons are not wanting who take it in high dudgeon that musicians should speak of "colour" in relation to their art; they profess themselves quite at a loss to understand what is meant by colour in Music. You may tell them that colour in Music is, by analogy, just what it is in Painting. They

scout the idea! The analogy is purely imaginary, and, what is even worse, inaccurate; it does not hold water! You may insist that the term has been in use musically for centuries, that every musician understands its meaning; that *Klangfarbe* is excellent German, that the downright English have even taken the trouble to translate it literally by the somewhat Carlylesque "clang-tint," but that for ordinary mortals "colour" is a sufficiently serviceable equivalent; in fine, that "colour" means "quality of sound."

—"But, my very dear sir," they answer, "you are all off! There is no analogy at all between the two things. Admitting the analogy between light—that is, colour—being the result of undulations of the luminiferous ether, and sound, of vibrations of the air, there is still no analogy between visual colour and auditory sound-quality. Colour depends upon the *rapidity* of the luminous undulations; but the rapidity of vibration in sound has to do with *pitch*, with high and low, not with *quality* of tone. Why, just read your Helmholz,

and you will see that quality of tone depends wholly upon . . ."

You cut this short by saying that you know all that perfectly well, that the whole musical world knows it; and, having perhaps a private grudge against Helmholz, — for reasons unnecessary to mention here, — you may be impudent enough to ask: "What of it?"

— "What of it? Why, this of it! that your analogy between colour and sound-quality is on beam ends!"

Then you take pity on the objectors, whose mental vision has been so dazzled by the dry light of Science that they can not see what is right before their noses. You explain that, in the Art of Painting, there are two elements: form and colour; in the Art of Music there are three: pitch, rhythm, and quality of sound . . .

— "Stop a bit!" they interrupt you, "you've forgotten one: dynamic force of sound."

— "Well! admit that, too," you go on, "admit dynamic force as a fourth element;

and, while we are about it, we may as well admit also rate of speed as a fifth. Now let us pair off such of these various elements as may fairly be considered analogous in the two arts, and eliminate such as have evidently no correlative. We may pair off form in Painting with what the world has agreed, for ages, to call form in Music; its constituent elements are pitch and rhythm. So, form in Painting cancels pitch and rhythm in Music; you agree to that?"

—"Yes, yes; we agree to that."

—"So far, good. Dynamic force of sound in Music might correspond to vividness of chiaro-'scuro in Painting. Shall we pair them off, and let them cancel each other?"

—"Well, yes; pair them off, too."

—"Now, is there anything in Painting to correspond to rate of speed in Music? to effects of *ritardando* or *accelerando*?"

—"No, we don't see that there is."

—"Then eliminate rate of speed, as it has no analogy in Painting. What have we left? Simply this: colour on the Painting side, and

sound-quality on the Music side; I say, the two correspond. You see, it would not be fair to eliminate any factor on one side of the equation, so long as there remains a factor on the other side that may possibly correspond to it. And, when only one factor is left on either side, we must pair off the two. Colour in Painting accordingly corresponds to quality of sound in Music; *q. e. d.*"

—"Ah! yes, if you put it that way. But the correspondence is purely fanciful; it is based on no scientific fact."

—"Just so; it *is* fanciful. It has nothing whatever to do with any analogy between ethereal undulations and atmospheric vibrations; it is arrived at, as you have seen, by pairing off other, more patent, analogies between the two arts, and by the artistic sense perceiving that the element of sound-quality bears precisely the same relation to that of form, in Music, that the element of colour does to form in Painting. This analogy has satisfied musicians completely, and not a painter that I ever heard of has kicked against it; so you and

your undulations and vibrations may go to thunder!"

Another point to which superaccurate Philistines have taken exception is the use of the terms "high" and "low" to denote musical tones of rapid and slow vibration, respectively. Philistines do I say? Some notable musicians, Berlioz among them, have expostulated with the rest of the world for using "high" and "low" in reference to musical pitch. It has been argued that there is no earthly reason for calling a tone produced by striking one of the keys at the left-hand end of the key-board "low" and speaking of the tone produced by striking at the right-hand end as "high." Ah! dear gentlemen: put your hand upon — not your heart, but — your throat; begin by singing what we, in our perverseness, call a "high" note; then sing step by step what we, with equal waywardness, persist in calling "down" the scale. Be sure to keep hold of your throat the while, and see if your Adam's-apple does not actually and sensibly *fall*. Now place your

hand upon your heart, — that you may not be forsworn, — sing "down" another scale from "top" to "bottom." Swear to me upon your sacred honour that you do not *seem to yourselves* to be singing farther and farther *down* into your thorax and abdominal cavity. Does n't it feel so? Of course it does.

Good heavens! men; you might just as well object to your own four-year-old's putting himself astride of your walking-stick, and calling it his horse. True, the youngster makes two palpable misstatements: in the first place, it is not a horse, and in the next place, it is not his. I advise you to go and spank him for it, just to give him a wholesome taste for scientific accuracy. You say our analogies limp? What of that? What looks to you like limping may strike us as graceful sinuosity of motion! Go to! — JOHN SQUEERS, *A Dissertation on the Imagination.*

The speculative individual who inwardly shouts for joy at discovering a new interpretation of a great work may in reality have been but

gleaning from the exegetic waste-baskets of past generations. But this is not necessarily so; there are so many ways of doing a thing wrong, that he may really have hit upon a new one.—FUNGOLFACTOR SCRIBLERUS, *De stultitia.*

How little that is definite can be said about a work of art without laying a certain stress upon technicalities! Yet how signally what we may have to say on merely technical points fails to reach the heart of the matter! We dislike this or that work of art, and think to account for our disliking by putting our finger upon what we call its weak points. But, in so doing, have we really accounted for and given the true reason of our disliking? Meseems all we have accomplished is to show why we are content to dislike it. — FUNGOLFACTOR SCRIBLERUS, *De sentienda arte.*

Show me the man to whom Virtue is as cakes and ale, and whose mouth burns with sweet Charity as with ginger; and I will rather ask him to dinner than dine with him. — PLEUTHRO PAPYRUS, *Anarchiana.*

An interesting and withal instructive process, in the observant study of national character, is to note the words which a people has agreed to use in a good, a bad, or merely an indifferent sense. To the Anglo-Saxon, for instance, the word *theatrical* well-nigh inevitably implies something insincere and unworthy; to the Frenchman, on the other hand, the word *théâtral* is freighted with no such implication. All nations, however, seem to agree in detecting an implied reproach in the word *pedantic;* the hapless pedant catches it all round! For which let no sane mortal shed tears of pity. For, if the tailor is but the ninth part of a man, the pedant can hardly be much more; he being to Literature and Art what the tailor is to society. The tailor would have all men, and the pedant, all ideas, concealed in impeccably fashionable clothes; and, to both, the clothes are the matter of supreme importance. — DIOGENE CAVAFIASCHETTO, *Paralipomena.*

If there be one man who will never discover the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Art, that

man is Mr. Impeccable. This is perhaps providential; for, could he but succeed in finding his way thither, he would think to have fallen into marvellous sinful company. — DIOGENES HODOBATES, *Cynicisms.*

Brissot says, "Music, which teachers formerly proscribed as a 'diabolical art,' begins to make part of the general education." Even so! But the results of its making part of this general education have not invariably given the lie to the older teachers' estimate of it. — HANS SCHWARTEMAG, *Die schönen Künste ethisch betrachtet.*

The great men who have written what was in them to write, and written it because they had it to say, have at times had their meed of unsought glory; but the men who have written for glory have oftenest gone thither. — MONTGOMERY BULLYCARP, *The Transcendental Traveller's Guide.*

I am a man of my own time; I was born into it, I live in it — and in it alone. My time may be a hideous time, for aught I know

— or care; but it is mine. The men of my time speak the language I best understand; they speak it fluently, and I catch their slightest innuendoes without effort. Do I regret other times and ages? How can I? If I did, I should regret being myself! — JEAN GUILLEPIN, *Ce qu'on puise dans un puits.*

What is the mystic telegraphic wire which connects the performer with the listener? Over it pass all the more poignant musical impressions, as by a sort of mysterious, transcendental electricity. But why is it that this transcendental telegraph between the music's inmost soul and yours is so capricious? Why is it sometimes the best of conductors, and, at others, none at all? Or is there, in truth, no such wire? Can it be that what you mistake for it is but a subjective condition of your own stomach? — GOTTFRIED SCHNEITZBÖRSTER, *Versuch eine physiologische Aesthetik zu begründen.*

A poetic musician, a musical poet: two mighty good things, in their way! That is,

if the musician be a musician, and the poet, a poet. — KYON CHRONOGENES, *De rebus vulgaribus.*

You have worked hard, have you? Lodged in back garrets, filled your belly with crusts, made merry on cold water and imagination scrimped, cut down expenses, developed an astounding technique, written compositions galore that shall outlive the ages? And all for the love of Art? Ah! my hyperbolical young friend, what do you take me for? I have heard all that before. — DIOGENES HODOBATES, *Cynicisms.*

Thou hast finished thy work, and art sure it is great music? Then keep it to thyself, and remain sure. For, if thou givest it to the world, there is not one man in ten thousand but will see no greatness in it; — unless perchance thou give it a silly name, and let it end diminishing, and ever diminishing, till the muted strings are scarcely audible. — JOHN SMITH, *On the Practical Uses of Cunning.*

They who were once content to be musicians now aspire to be tone-poets. If I mistake not, Beethoven himself had something of this hankering. Well, if the name is all they are after, I have no objection. Only let them look to it that they take not off the rose from the fair forehead of an innocent art, nor sweet melody make a rhapsody of words. — FUNGOLFACTOR SCRIBLERUS, *De stultitia.*

Extol or dispraise a work of art, simply because thou hast been eavesdropping upon thy betters and overheard them praise or condemn it — that is hypocritical cant. Extol or dispraise a work of art, because thy unaided reason has told thee it is good or bad — that is sincere cant; somewhat the feller sort, if thou didst but know it, for it is cant wedded to sincerity, and, like other spouses, going at large under the husband's name. — IMMANUEL FLOHJÄGER, *Ueber Ethik und Kunstwesen.*

When the savage tries to imitate the man of civilization, his imitation is of the ludicrous sort mainly. He puts the various garments in

which civilized man seeks concealment to adventurous uses, not contemplated by tailor nor milliner. We foolishly laugh at him; whereas it might be well for us to consider rather whether civilized man be not equally apt a subject for derisive cachinnation when he tries to imitate the savage. Have some of our composers, with their fond use of folk-melodies, ever thought of this? — HANS SCHWARTEMAG, *Die schönen Künste ethnologisch betrachtet.*

Ah! my débonnaire brother. So I am the fashion now, am I? The ladies dote on my howlings. Well, let me make hay while the sun shines, for my hour may not be overlong. Thy turn may come again at any time; till then, take thy rest. For thou hast ever been kind to me; and, when thy turn has come, I will leave the field to thee with as good a grace as my uncouthness permits, and go howl in my cave as of yore. — DIOGENE CAVAFIASCHETTO, *Il nuovo Valentino e Orsone.*

Dear Sensibility, O la! I heard a little lamb cry, baa! And forthwith went and pro-

claimed to the world that the little lamb had made all poets and composers ridiculous. Most of the world believed me, and pinched the little lamb to cry, baa, again; but there were some who called me a fool! — DIOGENES HODOBATES, *Cynicisms.*

The poet and the composer have, in one way, an easier time of it than the painter and sculptor. The former can work over their ideas as long as they list, without thereby impairing the integrity of their original sketch. But the painter or sculptor, working over his sketch, may in a moment of too ambitious conscientiousness obliterate a stroke of genius forever. — FUNGOLFACTOR SCRIBLERUS, *De Artis natura.*

"Without passion," said Theodore Parker, "this world would be a howling wilderness." Without passion, genius loses half its geniality. But passion is not genius, for all that, any more than it is the world. They who try to make sheer passion pass current for genius are but sorry false-coiners at best.

—JEAN GUILLEPIN, *Ce qu'on puise dans un puits.*

"*Jenseits von Gut und Böse,*" says Nietzsche, "on the other side of Good and Evil." And moralists frown, or laugh sardonically, according to their temper. But has not the world already gone far toward practically accepting Nietzsche's idea? Does not society often accept genius as an all-sufficient passport, even without the visa of good morals?

. . . . . .

"*Umwerthung der Werthe,*" cries Nietzsche again, "transvaluation of values." But why cry so loud for what will, and must, come of itself? Meseems the works of any great composer you please, and their fate in this world, furnish a tolerable illustration of the inevitableness of such a transvaluation.—HANS SCHWARTEMAG, *Die schönen Künste ethisch betrachtet.*

It is with Music as it is with jokes. When either needs an accompanying diagram, I become suspicious.—DIOGENES SPATZ, *Ueber Kunst und Dummheit.*

Heaven save us from conventionality! Well, nothing else can; that is sure enough. But, were heaven to undertake the job on a wholesale scale, then were Babel returned — for a season. — DIOGENE CAVAFIASCHETTO, *Il nuovo Valentino e Orsone.*

Hast thou an ambition to run an opera company "as it should be run" — and has never been run before? Well, thy ambition is noble. Only remember that the literal Englishing of the Italian word "*impresario*" is "undertaker." — MONTGOMERY BULLYCARP, *The Transcendental Traveller's Guide.*

According to Richard Wagner, the Music-Drama is the offspring of Poetry (the strong man) and Music (the loving woman). Is one reason why those of our later composers who have espoused the Music-Drama evince an anxiety to make their works more dramatic than musical, that they look upon Music as their mother-in-law? — DIOGENES SPATZ, *Ueber Kunst und Dummheit.*

The world accepts and keeps an artist's work on its own terms; not on the artist's. — IMMANUEL FLOHJÄGER, *Ueber Ethik und Kunstwesen.*

What is the secret of a singer's or player's hold upon an audience? Technique and virtuosity, some will say; others, temperament and passion. But I say it is the surplus nervous force he has, over and above that needful for the physical performance of his task. — GOTTFRIED SCHNEITZBÖRSTER, *Versuch eine physiologische Aesthetik zu begründen.*

Draw thy inspiration from whence thou canst; be happy if it come to thee at all. Yet remember that, the nearer the source, the fresher it will be and the less costly. Thou must ever pay a certain mileage on thy inspiration; look not far abroad for it, nor into distant ages, till thou hast made sure thou canst not find it next door. — DIOGENE CAVAFIASCHETTO, *La filosofia delle cose rare.*

The musical critic of genius, like Schumann or Berlioz, is undoubtedly a desideratum in

every art-loving community; but how rare a bird he is! Yet, in his absence, the straightforward, honest man of passable lights may do much. Let him never forget what a combination of qualities it takes to justify a man's passing judgment autocratically upon a new work; let him first test himself, before he ventures to declare this good, and that, bad. Upon the whole, in so far as criticism accomplishes anything, incalculably more harm can be done by misplaced blame than by unwise praise. A new work, damned at the outset by the "dastardly spurt of the pen," has but a cloudy immediate future before it; whereas the composition that begins by shining with the spurious lustre of unmerited praise acquires thereby a prominence which exposes it to the scrutiny of all.

Has it ever occurred to some critics that they may err in asking too much? It seems at times as if no composer to-day could give anything to the world, without being floored on the very threshold of public recognition by having Bach, Beethoven, or Wagner merci-

lessly flung at his head. What need is there of being always Titanic? The Parthenon casts no shadow upon Trinity Court. Our delight in Paolo Veronese's *Marriage at Cana* is not a whit lessened by memories of the Sixtine Chapel ceiling. Michael Angelo's Adam, carelessly lying on his hill-side, with his gigantic strength of limb and that ineffable depth of adoration in his face just crystallizing into a gaze, looks as if he could sweep Paolo Veronese and his works out of existence with a single wave of his outstretched arm; yet the Veronese still enjoys a comfortable immortality. But one would think that the *St. Matthew-Passion, Don Giovanni,* the ninth symphony, the B-flat trio, and *Tristan und Isolde* stood like an appalling "*Lasciate ogni speranza*" over the portal through which all new music must pass, to reach the public heart. Intolerable! Why should the godlike C minor symphony, that Olympian "*Lamento e trionfo,*" begrudge Liszt's *Tasso* its chivalric brilliance? Is Tchaikovsky's first concerto the less vigourous, because Beethoven's

wondrous E-flat stands unapproached? Let this sort of criticism stop, that the world may see more clearly what there is to see!

The critical Dryasdust, with the brain of a Corliss engine and the soul of a gnat, who has searched the learning of the schools to his own confusion, and would measure divine Music by his contrapuntal foot-rule, is an irritating mortal, but does comparatively little harm. Being merely a thinking-machine, he can speak no vital word; he can put two and two together, and make a deafening cackle about hatching out four, but can add little to the stock of the world's experience. But the untutored Enthusiast, whose swelling soul spurns all earthly shackles, who soars blissfully through the realms of High Art, hero-worship, and the Sublime and Beautiful in general, launching thunderbolts with one hand and showering benedictions in the vaguest manner with the other, — *he* will ever remain an astonishment to the thinking observer. When the human mind, from amongst its various potential activities, chooses that of doing

what it knows next to nothing about, — be it the building of monuments, or the writing of reviews, — there is no telling what sublime heights of bewilderment it may not reach. The untutored Enthusiast is often more narrow than the musical scholastic himself; for, in his giddy careering through space, he is too unconscious of any landmark, save his own preconceived notions, to see within what a small circle the centripetal force of his ignorance confines his course. To read the writings of some of these men, one would think that, like Paracelsus's *homunculi*, "through Art they receive their life, through Art they receive body, flesh, bones, and blood, through Art are they born; therefore is Art in them incarnate and innate, and they need learn it of no man, but men must learn it of them; for from Art they have their existence, and have grown up like a rose or flower in the garden." — FUNGOLFACTOR SCRIBLERUS, *De stultitia*.

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